



NEWSLETTER

**341**

2 November 2022

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*Goldfish Mandarin Garnet ring*

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# ARTMAN CO.



Turquoises

Courtesy Herbert Stephan. GemGenève

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# JEWELRY





## GEMGENÈVE, THE FINEST IN THE WORLD JEWELLERY

A few months after its spring edition, GemGenève will again be held from 3 to 6 November in Hall 6 of Palexpo. And it gives pride of place to its cultural programme.

The challenge was a big one. Only five months after its spring edition, GemGenève returns with a full line-up of 170 exhibitors worldwide to celebrate the excellence of jewellery. Precious stones, rare and unique gems, pearls, antique jewellery, historical and contemporary creations... It must be said that the May 2022 edition has been acclaimed by the exhibitors and the general public, who are asking for more. The organisers have reason to be pleased with 4,850 visits recorded last spring, including more than 3,000 public entries. "We had initially planned only one edition in 2022. But after the success of the May edition and at the express request of our exhibitors, we decided to organise a second edition in November 2022 in Geneva, but this should not be the norm in the future," says Ronny Totah, co-founder of this show created in 2018 to offer an alternative to jewellery trade shows, which are reluctant to open up to the general public. From 3 to 6 November, GemGenève is thus making its return to Palexpo in a new ground-level hall. A well-chosen calendar coincides with the significant autumn auctions of Geneva Luxury Week.

### **"By the exhibitors, for the exhibitors."**

Founded in 2018 by two Geneva gemstones and jewellery dealers, Ronny Totah and Thomas Faerber, GemGenève was imagined and thought up "by exhibitors for exhibitors", according to the now-established formula. The idea? To show the general public the often unknown ecosystem of this hushed, not to say discreet, milieu. Dealers in precious stones, diamonds, pearls and jewellery rub shoulders with gemological laboratories, manufacturers, specialist booksellers, experts and internationally renowned historians. According to

its founders, GemGenève was born of a market need and a previously untapped opportunity [see box p.24]. "GemGenève, a new generation of trade shows, wishes to remain a human-sized show with a family character. It is a real meeting place for professionals and jewellery enthusiasts; to date, it has no equivalent," continues Ronny Totah. There is something for everyone: from affordable jewellery, through exceptional or even rare pieces, to ancient and historical gems and contemporary creations, not forgetting diamonds, precious stones, coloured stones and natural or cultured pearls. The notion of a hub and laboratory of ideas, dear to the organisers, brings together a wide range of people: jewellery designers, gem dealers, retailers, collectors, connoisseurs, professional and private buyers, experts, museum institutions and art schools.

Among the exhibitors, 144 professional dealers from 19 countries have decided to return, even though the two editions of the fair have come closer together. The percentage of re-registrations

### Conferences and round tables

#### “Bulgari Jewels, history of Bulgari and creation of its style”

by Amanda Triossi

#### “Collecting antique jewellery”

a conversation between Helen Molesworth (Senior Curator of the Jewellery Gallery at the V&A Museum) and Vivienne Becker (author and jewellery historian)

#### “Fabergé and his influence on his contemporaries”

by Olivier Bachet

#### “Micro-mosaics: an introduction to the Gilbert Collection”

by Alice Minter, curator of the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum

#### “Micro-mosaics and Roman mosaics”

a cross discussion between Alice Minter and Sophie Bärtschi, curator of the Roman Site and Museum of Avenches

#### “ROMAMOR: mosaic jewellery from the Imperial Napoleonic Court to the archaeological revival”

by Andrea Petochi and Professor Anna Maria Massinelli, former curator of the Gilbert collection and author of the monograph on Giacomo Raffaelli

#### “Between science and commerce, what the names of stones say about us”

a round table organised by the Gemmologie et Francophonie association on the issues of the naming of precious stones and its legal aspects.

#### “What Makes Exceptional Design”

a round table moderated by the influencer Katerina Perez with David Roux-Fouillet, head of the Product Design, Jewellery and Accessories department at HEAD Geneva, the expert Olivier Bachet and Vivienne Becker, jewellery historian

#### “Jewellery education: training companies”

by invitation only, round table and workshop between ASMEBI, CFP Arts Geneva, OFPC and companies

#### “Exploring gemstone mining: Sri Lanka and Zambia”

by Richa Goyal Sikri, journalist

#### “The Treasures of Tutankhamun and his legacy in jewellery”

by Gislain Aucremanne, jewellery historian

from the famous Mahenge region in Tanzania, East Africa and Sri Lanka. The company has direct access to the Mahenge mines, where it selects the most beautiful gems. And it is represented in Sri Lanka, one of the world's coloured gemstone capitals. Also in Singapore, Madly sources directly from Tanzania, where some of the world's most stunning gems come from. “No two coloured gemstones are alike, and they are often much rarer than white diamonds,” according to the company, which is a member of the International Coloured Stone Association's ethical accreditation programme, the first of its kind in the coloured gemstone industry [see p.74].

Switzerland is, of course, in the spotlight among the exhibitors. Founded by Cyrille de Foucaud some twenty years ago, Orphéo Genève specialises in purchasing, selling and appraisal of antique and historical jewellery, precious stones, collector's watches and unusual art objects. Filippo G&G, whose lapidary workshop is based in the heart of Geneva's old town, specialises in coloured precious and semi-precious stones. In contrast, Edigem, based in Zurich, focuses on antique and vintage jewellery. Also in Geneva, Golay Fils & Stahl, an old house founded in 1837, creates and supplies exclusive jewellery but also buys and sells diamonds, coloured stones, and vintage, antique and signed jewellery. A family tradition that has continued for six generations.

Alongside these established houses, GemGenève also opens its doors to emerging talents. An entire section of the show, led by Nadège Totah, the co-founder's daughter, is dedicated to them. The work of these creators is exhibited in a dedicated space at the heart of GemGenève,” she explains. A space where visitors can discover and appreciate the new dynamism driving jewellery today. This year, the “Emerging Talents” section presents,

between the May and November 2022 editions is more than 80%,” says Ronny Totah. More than 43 exhibitors are participating in GemGenève for the fifth time, and more than 24 will visit the show for the first time. Exhibitors from the USA lead the way, accounting for a quarter of all participants. They are followed by those from Switzerland, Hong Kong, Israel, Germany, Belgium, Thailand,

India and France. Newcomers are represented by houses such as Ashok Jewellers (India), Arslanian Group (Belgium), House of Art, and Madly, Mahenge Gems, Sunny Gem, Miranda Group (Hong Kong), and Heritage Signed Jewels (Portugal).

In Asia, a significant market for gems and jewellery, Mahenge Gems of Singapore shows coloured stones



Yin & Yang ring, Alexandra Jefford  
Courtesy Alexandra Jefford. GemGenève







Dance of Nature shoe  
Courtesy Diva Jewels. GemGenève



Courtesy SRK GemGenève

“We value gemstones, jewellery design and jewellery making as much as we value creating a real solidarity between the international community of gem and antique jewellery dealers, designers and jewellery enthusiasts. — *Thomas Faerber*”

among others, the work of Wallis Hong, a self-taught multidisciplinary jewellery artist born in China and living in Spain; Serendipity Jewellery created in 2017 in Paris by Christine Chan; and the Vincent Michel jewellery workshop, which offers bespoke work and a high jewellery collection made up of unique pieces. As for the “Designer Vivarium”, curated by Vivienne Becker, it welcomes, as it does every year, new designers, particularly the Estonian Tenzo, who has already presented at the previous editions and who will unveil his latest collection.

#### Exhibitions galore

But what makes GemGenève so unique is its educational and cultural programme. For the founders of the show, it was not only a question of bringing the profession together but also of giving it a say in the future of its professions, which are often unknown to the general public. Hence its cooperation with art, jewellery and watchmaking schools to pass the torch to the new generation. HEAD, the Geneva University of Art and Design, is presenting bachelor’s degree projects from students in the Product, Jewellery and Accessory Design Department, while the Association Romande des Métiers de la Bijouterie (ASMEBI), which oversees the organisation of technical training in jewellery, is exhibiting its professional courses. To inspire people and why not create a vocation, there is nothing like showing in situ the making of a jewel. Two workbenches have been set up in the heart of the exhibition’s

educational centre to discover the traditional technical production of jewellery pieces, from the manufacture of the mount and bezels to the sawing and filing stage, as well as all the creative work that precedes it, such as drawings or wax engravings. Students from various art schools in the region — the Geneva Professional Arts Training Centre (CFP Arts), the Neuchâtel Professional Arts Training Centre (CPNE Pôle Arts Appliqués) and the Vallée de Joux Technical School (ETVJ) — will be demonstrating. During the exhibition, a new gouache competition between the three schools will be launched on the theme “Nothing is lost, everything is transformed”. And to ensure that all professions, and not only the creative ones, are represented, the show also welcomes the CREA Genève — OMNES Education, a school offering Bachelor and Master courses in Marketing, Communication and Digital luxury goods.

On the cultural side, the show has established a partnership with the Grand Théâtre de Genève, which is exhibiting this year the costumes of the first opera of its 2022/2023 season, *La Juive*. This is a way of highlighting the work of the workshops and creating a link between two worlds of an excellent know-how, stage costumes and jewellery. Above all, the autumn edition of GemGenève stands out from the previous ones by its XXL exhibition programme. Three events within the event: “Forty years of the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation”

[see p.30], “The art of micromosaics” [see p.38] and “The Gem Museum, Singapore” [see p.70].

Some 100 Fabergé pieces are on display for the first of these, including three imperial eggs. This event’s significance extends beyond the exhibition itself. Two eggs on display are being presented to the public for the first time and will be published in the *catalogue raisonné* devoted to this jewellery legend. The lesser-known art of micromosaics is being rediscovered with pieces loaned by exhibitors, museum institutions and private collectors. This is an in-depth look at the art of miniature painting, which reveals bird motifs, mythological subjects and images of famous monuments. So many themes are dear to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the spirit of the Grand Tour. But also contemporary pieces... and Roman pieces from the Aventicum site. Alice Minter, curator of the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection at the V&A Museum in London, and Sophie Bartschi, curator of the Avenches sites and museum, will speak about this in public during their lectures [see box p.14]. Installed in the “La Villa” space at the heart of the exhibition, The Gem Museum of Singapore will present a collection of precious stones and scientific awareness workshops allowing the manipulation, observation and discovery of the fascinating universe of beautiful stones. Because GemGenève is above all about that: marvelling and dreaming in front of the most beautiful stones in the world.

“With GemGenève, we share and transmit knowledge; we are committed to making the public, both informed and uninformed, aware of and encouraged to learn and discover. We pass on our passion for the world of jewellery and precious stones. — *Ida Faerber and Nadège Totah*”





# MINI STRAWBERRY



Pinkish Red Spinel

Courtesy Mahenge Gems. GemGenève

## “THE SPIRIT OF GEMGENÈVE IS HOSPITALITY”

To put this edition together in record time, the GemGenève organisers maintained a permanent dialogue with their exhibitors. A story of trust, shared values and emulation.

Founded in 2018 by Ronny Totah and Thomas Faerber, GemGenève will celebrate its 5<sup>th</sup> edition in November 2022. Around them, a small team led by Mathieu Dekeukelaire and Nadège Totah is busy organising this “human-sized” fair. A challenge since the November edition was put together in barely five months, building on the success of the previous GemGenève, which took place in May 2022. Let’s take a look behind the scenes of the event with Mathieu Dekeukelaire and Nadège Totah as guides.

### **Tell us about your May edition. What feedback did you get?**

**Nadège Totah:** The success of last May’s event has confirmed our position in the international market. The entire industry was there and praised the quality of the show. Although GemGenève is still a young show, we have asserted ourselves and the event is now part of the exhibitors’ calendar.

**Mathieu Dekeukelaire:** For their part, the buyers highlighted several positive points during the May edition. First of all, the atmosphere of the show. The spirit of GemGenève is above all hospitality, for both buyers and exhibitors. Secondly, it is a show on a human scale, unlike some of the big events in the sector, such as those held in Asia, for example. You can do everything in one day without having to rush around: scouting, making contacts and discovering the cultural programme. The third point, and not the least, is the high quality of the pieces that are presented at the fair.

### **How do you go about selecting the pieces?**

**NT:** Our exhibitors have carte blanche. For us, this is a great pleasure, because as organisers, we discover the pieces at the same time as the

visitors. Even if this makes things a little more complicated from an operational point of view! We don’t have any say in the choice of exhibits, but from the start of the show in 2018, we set some general rules, such as making an effort to present the exhibits. And we are delighted, because all our exhibitors play the game with high quality stands. The other essential point that exhibitors are reminded of is ethics. And we are very strict about this. If they have any doubts about a signature or a provenance, it is better not to present the piece. Transparency is essential in our profession and at our fair, because the public is mixed. This matter of trust is also important among the dealers themselves. For them, the question of provenance, for example, is a point of vigilance in their daily activities.

### **And how do you choose the participants?**

**MD:** There is no selection committee like in an art fair, because our strength is that we know our exhibitors well. It’s a very small international scene, everyone knows everyone else. The families of the two

*3 questions to... fondateurs*

founders, Ronny Totah and Thomas Faerber, are recognised and respected by the milieu. They have a high level of trust and all exhibitors recognise the quality of their work. The selection of participants is done in consultation. And of course, some exhibitors who are not necessarily known are also invited to the fair. This variety is what makes it so rich.

**NT:** In this field, we are often children of dealers, who themselves come from families that have been working in this world for several generations. Trust is very important in our field, it's a small world.

**What kind of public comes to visit GemGenève?**

**MD:** Families, the curious, professionals, students, lovers of beautiful things... In fact, our audiences are extremely varied. In May, we recorded more than 3,000 visitors. The world of jewellery and precious stones is fascinating and it catches you when you start to look into it. Let's not forget that jewellery pieces are often part of art and history.

**NT:** Jewellery fairs are often trade shows. We wanted to make it easier for the general public to get up close and personal with exceptional pieces and to discuss them with the experts on site. It is for this reason that we did not want to put doors on the stands. Our exhibitors are available to transmit, exchange and share. At other fairs, approaching jewellery, gems or jewellery-making can be intimidating. Here, the atmosphere is very different, more friendly.

**Why did you make the decision to open the show to the general public?**

**NT:** Most of our exhibitors are often dealers who sell to other dealers

Ronny Totah and Thomas Faerber are the founders of GemGenève.

**Why did you create GemGenève?**

**Ronny Totah:** As exhibitors, we knew what we wanted from a trade show, what we liked or didn't like, what we were missing. So we thought that to be successful, we had to do a show that we felt good about. When we went to the other side of the fence, we had no plan. However, people followed us because we were offering them a salon that was different from the others. Our ages and reputations helped a lot. And then, we are surrounded by our children and event professionals.

**What makes the show so special?**

**Thomas Faerber:** It's a show created by the exhibitors, for the exhibitors. Our aim is not to make money like most organisers, although a trade fair must, of course, be financially balanced. The idea was to create a new alternative fair for our profession.

**Unlike many trade fairs, yours is culturally oriented. Why is that?**

**Ronny Totah:** Creating bridges is a desire. The aim of GemGenève is not financial, the aim of GemGenève is to make an event. We want to arouse interest and above all make people want to come back. Basically, we do this for pleasure...

themselves. But we are always open to receive requests from individuals. It is also a question of raising the veil on our professions to create vocations. Hence the schools and cultural conferences that are invited as part of our programme to ensure the continuity of the sector and to promote a cultural and scientific heritage that is not necessarily known to everyone. The know-how of the jewellery industry is often less visible than that of the fashion industry. Our show allows them to be discovered.

**MD:** Another important point is that dealers often have old jewellery pieces. People may be interested in these pieces to collect them as art objects. Of course, dealers are at the fair to sell, but when they present high quality pieces, they are also defending a cultural heritage.

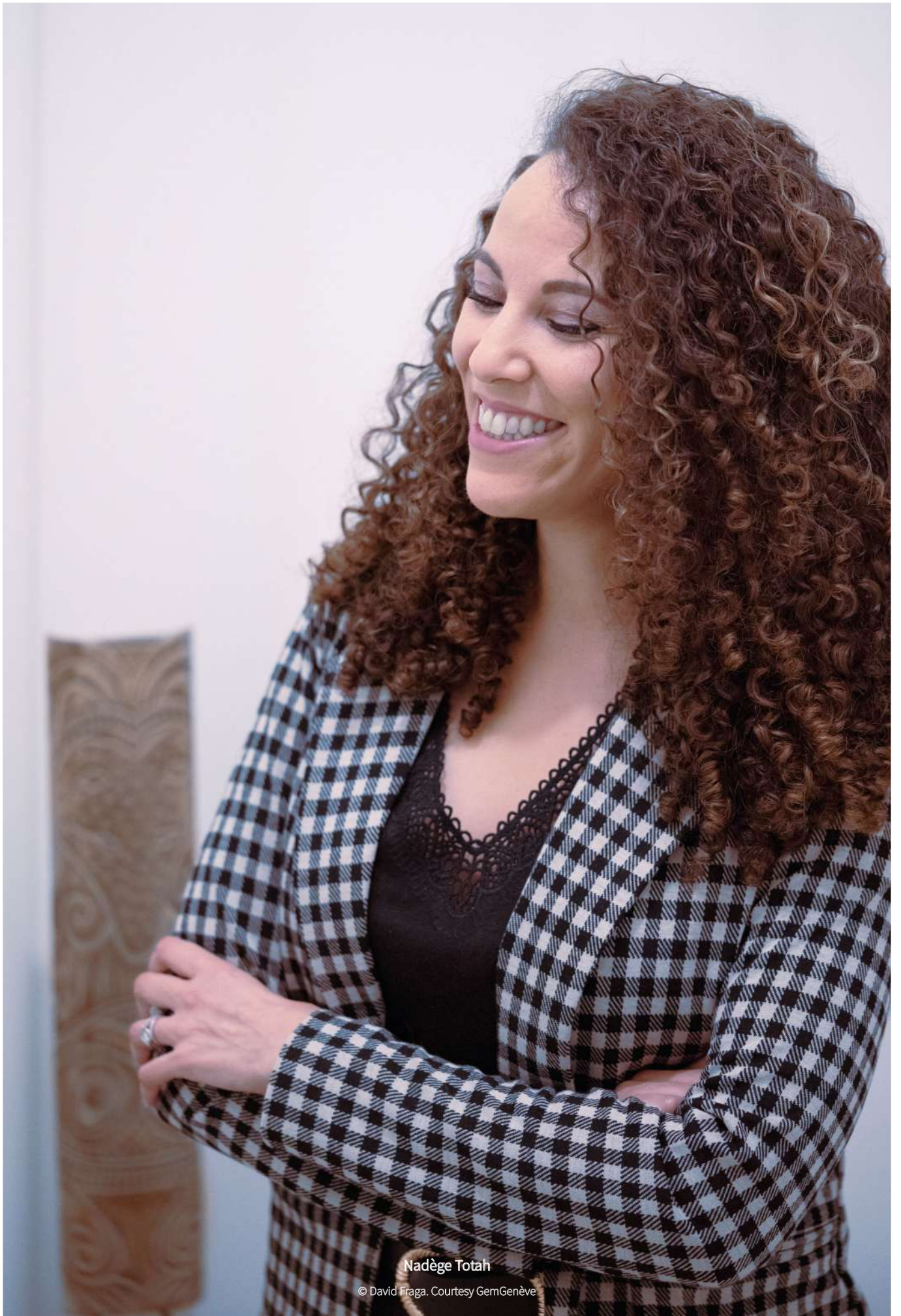
**Why did you re-launch a new edition of the fair in November?**

**MD:** In May, we already had discussions and ideas about our future edition. When we talked to our buyers and visitors from the spring edition, this demand for an autumn fair emerged. It was only then that we got the ball rolling again, starting from scratch, so to speak, because due to availability issues, we had to change the exhibition hall at Palexpo, and therefore rethink everything in terms of space, circulation and scenography. Not to mention the cultural programme that had to be put together in just five months. Somehow, we are used to it: between the inaugural show in 2018, then the postponements and interruptions of Covid, then the relaunch of the show, etc., we have

“Dealers are researchers. They have a special relationship with their clients, like gallery owners. They will go and look for a particular piece or stone for them. This little treasure-hunting side of things is a whole part of the dealers' work.

— *Mathieu Dekeukelaire*





Nadège Totah

© David Fraga. Courtesy GemGenève

“There is a story behind each stone, behind each piece. People want to wear more and more jewellery that has a history, a story. For the last ten or fifteen years, there has been an attraction for vintage jewellery which is coming back. It’s not a new piece of jewellery, it was sometimes worn more than a hundred years ago, and an emotion emerges from it. — *Nadège Totah*

to rethink everything. In fact, every year we’re pretty much starting over with a zero edition.

**NT:** No two editions are alike.

We change all the locations each time, trying, for example, not to put two diamond dealers side by side. Everyone is on an equal footing.

The other rule is never to put large stands at the front, but rather something attractive to the public.

#### **How do you determine your cultural programme?**

**MD:** Everything is created naturally through the commitment of each participant. It is by talking to a historian, an expert or an exhibitor that the topics come up. The development of the programme is based on three pillars: the freedom for each participant to propose something, the adequacy of the project with the spirit of our fair and a step-by-step construction, a feeling if you like. This is, for example, the case with the Fabergé exhibition [see p.30]. The Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation contacted us when we were preparing our exhibition on enamel last May. They offered us a loan of works related to this subject. We exhibited three or four pieces from them. They were convinced by the success and quality of the exhibition. This is how the idea of an exhibition dedicated to the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation came about. For our November edition, we are presenting three imperial eggs and 140 exceptional pieces at GemGenève.

For the conferences and talks, we work with renowned historians and experts such as Amanda Triossi [see box p.56], Vivienne Becker, the Gemmologie et Francophonie association. As the exhibitors come from very different backgrounds, we try to illustrate this diversity in the panel of talks, so that they touch on gemmology and the laboratory, as well as the history of the houses, designers and artistic movements, and the challenges and future of the profession.

#### **What trends do you observe in jewellery today?**

**NT:** Sourced jewellery has always been in demand, but even more so now. I feel that since Covid, people have had more time to research and learn new things. For example, there have been a lot of webinars on the subject. Passions have been born. The public has been ‘educated’, so to speak. The Asian market, for example, is increasingly looking for jewellery that has a history. They want to know where they came from, who owned them before. The Art Deco period is also emerging in current trends, as well as designs from the 1960s and 1970s. There is a real revival of interest in this often more massive, easily wearable jewellery. And if it’s signed, it’s even better!

#### **What about gems?**

**NT:** The main trend for gems at the moment is the search for top quality, whatever the category: diamonds, coloured stones or precious stones. If I take the example of Kashmir sapphires, it’s the provenance that makes people dream, because these sapphires have a special velvety quality that is quite unique. For coloured stones, we like bright colours, we will go for example towards very orange shades.

#### **What do you like most about organising the show?**

**MD:** Because we do it with our hearts, we are always underwater! We are lucky enough to work in an environment that we are passionate about and to put together projects that we enjoy. It’s also the excitement of discovering the exhibitors’ pieces and projects, which we see ‘in real life’ for the first time in the showcases after having spoken to them at length. And then, finding the atmosphere of the show is a pleasure every time.







Mathieu Dekeukelaire  
© David Fraga. Courtesy GemGenève

# F. X. FABERGÉ



*Snowflake brooch*

Courtesy Igor Carl Fabergé. GemGenève



## FORTY YEARS OF EXCELLENCE AND SHARING

Founded in 1982 after the death of Igor Carl Fabergé, the grandson of Carl Fabergé, the Foundation that now bears his name aims to share and promote the work of Carl Fabergé and his descendants, as well as keeping art and tradition alive.

The Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation is in the limelight for this autumn edition of GemGenève. To celebrate its forty years of existence, it presents a hundred pieces illustrating the quality and know-how of Carl Fabergé and his venture in the “Fabulous Carl Fabergé” exhibition. Among the exceptional objects presented, the public can admire three imperial eggs, almost unheard of until today. They will be published in the new *catalogue raisonné* to be released in spring 2023.

### **The family art of transmission**

It all began in 1842 when Carl Fabergé’s father, Gustave Fabergé, opened a jewellery shop in Saint Petersburg. In 1870, his son took over the workshop and soon excelled in goldsmithery, gaining a prestigious reputation. Carl Fabergé extended apace his production beyond jewellery. He made many refined decorative objects, distinguished by the materials’ quality and work’s precision, and was quickly noticed by Russian emperor Alexander III. Having become a supplier to the Imperial Court, he opened two new shops in Moscow and Odessa. Before his exile in 1917, Carl Fabergé produced many refined decorative objects, including flowers, jewellery, figurines, frames, clocks, boxes, and the eggs, at the very core of his work. Still to this day, they remain symbols of creativity, know-how, ingenuity, and echo the splendour of the Romanov dynasty just before its fall, radiating beyond the borders of Russia.

Grandson of Carl Fabergé, Igor Carl Fabergé, designer of haute couture and jeweller, was born in 1907, ten years before the Bolshevik revolution. He moved to Switzerland in 1918 following the events in Russia,

and became an embroiderer. He also made jewellery and fantastic objects. With no descendants, he decided to establish a foundation in his name, which would perpetuate and disseminate the heritage of the House of Fabergé after his death. With this in mind, the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation was created, supported by the family’s descendants and enthusiasts of his art.

Carl Fabergé has often been considered the artist who pushed the art of giving to its peak. This is a legacy that the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation is working to preserve, retaining everything related to the work of Carl Fabergé and his descendants. The foundation gathers the Fabergé family archives, from the beginnings in Saint Petersburg to the opening of Fabergé Paris after the 1917 revolution. While this essential archival work was initially carried out patiently by Igor Carl Fabergé, Tatiana Fabergé, Carl Fabergé’s great-granddaughter, took over. “I was trained myself for quite a time by Tatiana Fabergé,” explains Bernard Ivaldi, president of the foundation. Describing himself

as a “guardian of the temple”, he oversees the preservation, transmission and dissemination of the treasures contained within the institution’s walls, including books, publications, souvenirs and pieces of goldsmithery.

#### Forty years of commitment

Since 1982, the Foundation has been promoting the Fabergé tradition and heritage. After forty years, it is celebrating its anniversary by exhibiting about 130 pieces, all linked one way or another to the workshop of the most celebrated jeweller of the century. “Among these pieces, about 70% come from Carl Fabergé’s workshops, both in Saint Petersburg and Moscow,” says Bernard Ivaldi. The aim of “Fabulous Carl Fabergé” is to highlight the variety of creative, meticulous and prestigious work produced in the jeweller’s workshops. The rest is devoted to presenting other pieces from the same period. It emphasises on the house’s influence on its contemporaries, such as Cartier, whose workshop was opened in 1847. A conference led by Olivier Bachet, a major Cartier specialist, is organised on the occasion of GemGenève to

explore this issue in greater depth and highlight the links between the two artists. Also on display, some pieces by the “Ukrainian Cartier” Joseph Marchak are exhibited. Recognized as a pivotal jeweller of its time, he was located in Kyiv and had his work spread, maybe to a lesser extent, in Europe — which the public can discover further on the Strong & Precious stand [\[see p.46\]](#). Illustrating the importance of the prestige of the Fabergé Empire and its impact on jewellers throughout the world, the exhibition thus presents European and non-European productions.

Among the objects presented, the three imperial eggs stand at the heart of the exhibition [\[see box\]](#). “These are eggs that had never been identified as imperial, so they have nothing to do with the 52, more or less, a number that everyone repeats without knowing exactly how many there were,” comments Bernard Ivaldi. He adds, “One had been exhibited before, but it had gone virtually unnoticed.” Alongside them, a vast array of objects: a large solid silver kettle from the 1910s, jewellery, brooches, complex stone objects —

jade in particular... “There will also be statues: bronzes of dancers from the Russian ballet period, sculptures made by one of Fabergé’s sculptors who created many of the stone animals in the British Royal Collection,” adds the president of the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation. An exhibition under the sign of eclecticism and excellence.

This fortieth anniversary is also an opportunity to update the *catalogue raisonné*, which should be published in spring 2023. In 2012, the Foundation published a book — dubbed *The Magnum Opus* or the Bible — *Fabergé, a Comprehensive Reference Book*, resulting from more than ten years of research. Updating this book and expanding the *catalogue raisonné* provides an opportunity to take stock of current knowledge on imperial eggs, mainly thanks to the three unpublished ones presented at GemGenève. This research and review work is particularly long and complex, as access to eggs — known to the Foundation — is not always easy. But research is at the heart of the Foundation’s mission, because it is the source of better transmission.

### Eggs

Fabergé eggs are a reference in the world of art and jewellery. The first imperial egg was given to Emperor Alexander III by Carl Fabergé, who broke new ground with this unusual Easter egg. The tsar was fascinated by the object and made it a tradition. Today, 52 imperial eggs are known to exist, scattered worldwide — although most are kept in the Shuvalov Palace. However, the three eggs on display at GemGenève have never been recognised as such for reasons of commercial interest. One is in the collection of the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation; the other two are kept in private collections.

*The Bouquet of Yellow Lilies*, dated 1893, is one of the displayed eggs. “It was exhibited in 1992 in Russia, at Tsarskoye Selo, then in 2000 in Wilmington, and in Zürich at the Swiss National Museum in 2017 for the exhibition ‘Switzerland and the Russian Revolution’”, explains Bernard Ivaldi. It was published in the *2012 Magnum Opus* but did not appear in the *catalogue raisonné*. The other two, *The Nephrite Egg of Elizabeth Feodorovna* (1904) and *The Tsesarevich Egg* (1905), offer the public a glimpse of Carl Fabergé’s mastery and talent. This unprecedented trio also shows the variety in styles, but also in the materials used. Each of them had already been mentioned or presented in auction catalogues but never acknowledged as imperial eggs per se. This is an opportunity for the Foundation to have them recognised by the public and by the experts of the most renowned jeweller of his time.

#### For the sharing of authentic art

The Foundation is a foundation under Swiss law and the supervision of the State of Geneva. It is composed of a Foundation Board chaired by Bernard Ivaldi and Alexandra Blin-Kourbatoff, Vice-President of the Foundation. In addition to this board, there is a committee of experts comprised of eight specialists and an advisory committee of seven, including the vice president. The role of each of these bodies is to ensure that the foundation is well managed and that it is faithful to its missions — “which is very important in Swiss law,” underlines Bernard Ivaldi. Thus, each member contributes to the foundation’s operations and activities according to its creator’s wishes, taking care of an exceptional legacy, inheritance and patrimony.





*Trellis brooch (c.1890)*

Courtesy Igor Carl Fabergé, GemGenève

# EXHIBITION

Despite its limited resources, the foundation produces articles, books and exhibitions to disseminate its history and heritage; inform and educate. In this context, the Foundation plays the role of censor and expert. Anyone wishing to have a Fabergé work appraised can call on the foundation's committee of experts and obtain a certificate of authenticity or an estimate, because with prestige often comes counterfeiting, and many fakes are circulating. "One of our aims is to separate the wheat from the chaff," says Bernard Ivaldi. The foundation conducts detective work by closely monitoring auctions: "We try to detect pieces that are not genuine Fabergé. This is important work for us, and we try to alert the auction houses if necessary. Several times we have seen fakes sold as real, and real ones sold as fakes," he continues. A vocation guided by ongoing research and meticulous analysis, or fieldwork on the auction benches and in expert appraisals in counterfeiting trials.

Since 2020, first the pandemic and then the war in Ukraine, however, there is little room for manoeuvre. "We were supposed to organise an extensive exhibition at the Catherine Palace, near Saint Petersburg. It was postponed several times and then cancelled. Today, it seems complicated to us to programme anything in Russia, at least for some time," confides the president of the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation. Despite these complicated exchanges, the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation does not give up. "There are some considerable collectors in the United States, and we hope to work with them. The following exhibitions will be either in Europe or in the United States. And maybe in Asia, in Singapore." So there are many plans for the future and a legacy that will live on for a long time.





Engraved sapphire pectoral icon  
Courtesy Igor Carl Fabergé. GemGenève





Kovch from the Mirabaud collection

Courtesy Igor Carl Fabergé, GemGenève

# FOCUS



Vanguard Bracelet *The Dream of the Koi Carp* (c.2017), Maurizio Fioravanti

© G. Torroni Collection. Courtesy GemGenève

# MICROMOSAICS: RETURN TO A GREAT TRADITION

Micromosaic is back in the spotlight. After falling into disuse at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is now making a significant comeback in contemporary jewellery. Here is an analysis of this art form, which should be approached closely...

From coloured stone pebbles to glass or marble, mosaic is a traditional art that has been passed down from generation to generation and has given art history some of its most beautiful achievements. A thousand-year-old technique, it was born in the cradle of civilisation, Mesopotamia. Over the centuries and with scientific advances, mosaics have become increasingly precise and meticulous.

## **Technique and know-how**

Mosaics are made from glass paste when not made from stone or ceramic. The latter is obtained by heating sand and chemical components in a furnace. Depending on the chemical elements used and the temperature, the colour of the glass varies. For large-format mosaics, the glass is flattened and cut into small squares. For micromosaics, these shards are then melted down in a metal crucible. The craftsman then obtains a paste from which he can spin long, thin rods of glass that will quickly solidify in contact with air. These rods are filed and then broken to obtain different dimensions. Each piece constitutes the palette the artist will use to create his work. The canes are selected according to their size, shape and colour.

Micromosaic is made on a metal support, on which the craftsman applies a paste that allows the tesserae to hold firmly in place. The craftsman breaks once more the glass rods into many small pieces. Each one is carefully positioned with tweezers. Before photography was invented and democratised, the artist would sketch the subject on the paste to have a guide. Today, artisans use photographs cut out as the project progresses. The most outstanding

quality of a micromosaic artist is the ability to produce the right shape and colour of tesserae. When creating a micromosaic, the artisans are constantly creating new canes throughout the process of creating the work to adapt and achieve the right tones. To this end, rods of different colours can be melted together to find a more appropriate shade. They can also be joined together to achieve a two-tone. The patterns, palette and shapes are endless. Each cane is unique and impossible to duplicate, which is the charm and complexity of micromosaics.

Once the image has been composed, the craftsman presses a wooden plate against the micromosaic to ensure each piece is in place. He can then proceed to polish. The artist melts the wax and pours it on the micromosaic to protect its surface. It is spread roughly with a brush and then scraped off with a heated blade. The cover is then sanded with sandpaper or a stone. The polishing process is repeated with increasingly fine sandpaper. For the final touch, the mosaicist

Micromosaics are made by craftsmen working with this technique for years. The fusion, the speed... it takes patience and self-sacrifice to get the gesture right with the wrist.  
— *Alice Minter*

applies an abrasive powder to work. A final coat of wax is used with a brush, which is then scraped off to remove the excess. The piece is repolished with a cloth to give it a soft and shiny appearance. The work takes weeks or even months. The Victoria & Albert Museum website has produced an informative video explaining the making of a micromosaic piece from A to Z.

### Genesis and evolution

Micromosaic appeared between Rome and Venice in Italy at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The impetus came from the Vatican, which saw in this meticulous art an opportunity to replace the paintings in Roman churches that were deteriorating and in danger of disappearing. The papal city then called on Venetian creators. Indeed, the mosaic tradition was intrinsically linked to the Byzantine Empire, and Venice was one of the strategic production sites. The Vatican, therefore, employed Venetian artists. Some specialised and gathered in workshops such as the Studio Vaticano del Mosaico, founded in 1727 and still in operation. In 1775, the Roman mosaicist Giacomo Raffaelli organised the first sale of works from his workshop, intended for private individuals. This was the beginning of the market for this Roman art and the opening up to non-religious subjects. But in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, micromosaics took off with the influx of wealthy European tourists for whom Rome was an essential part of their Grand Tour. Micromosaics became a means of creating refined travel souvenirs.

The craze was all the more potent because it was contemporary with the discovery of Herculaneum in the first third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Ancient

mosaics were in fashion, which allowed for a renewal of subjects. Giacomo Raffaelli had already given the impetus with his 1775 sale, but the archaeological frenzy reinforced it and fed the artists' desire to recreate perfect mosaics. The themes were, therefore, mainly antiquities landscapes and Roman ruins, but also floral and animal representations and still lifes. The mosaic artisans develop small glass rods called *smalti filati* — spun glazes. They offer an almost infinite range of colours and vivid details.

Micromosaic was a resounding success and spread throughout Europe. In France, the First Empire served this art of meticulousness more than any other period, and the works applied to the four corners of Europe, as far as Russia, where the Cavaliere artist Michelangelo Barberi responded to the orders of Tsar Nicolas I and began to spread his knowledge to a small group of artists. Domenico Moglia took over from him and trained George Ferdinand Weckler, the famous Russian micromosaicist. The success of the *mosaico romano* did not wane until the middle of the

19<sup>th</sup> century, and the arrival of photography significantly harmed it and traditional travel souvenirs. It gradually disappeared at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Remarkable Productions

One of the most famous examples of micromosaic is the gold set of Empress Marie-Louise of Austria, given by Emperor Napoleon I on the occasion of their luxurious wedding. Made by the jeweller François-Regnaut Nitot, it entered the inventory of the French crown jewels in 1811. If this set is so emblematic, it is because it remains today one of the rare ones that have not undergone any modification whatsoever. It consists of a comb, a necklace, a pair of bracelets and earrings. The gold comb is decorated with three *tondo* micromosaics, each representing a Roman ruin, as was the fashion of the time. The same applies to the bracelets, necklaces and earrings, the only difference being that micromosaics are rectangular. This imperial adornment shows the appeal of the antique, which allowed this art of detail to spread throughout Europe and to find its way into its most lavish courts.

### *Passing on the art of detail*

“Artists have been victims of discretion. We have no treatises or texts explaining techniques. The secrets are communicated orally. But to make this art known, we must open up. The transmission also means giving people the desire to learn, to create and to buy,” says Alice Minter, curator of the Victoria & Albert Museum’s Arthur and Rosalinde Gilbert collection. Some applied arts schools are now returning to teaching micromosaics, such as the London School of Mosaics, which has developed its workshop. The school educates its students to master this technique to create their contemporary works. But the London School of Mosaics also aims to train conservators-restorers who will be able to take care of these little-known works. Despite a strong presence in the art market since the 1970s, thanks mainly to the collector Arthur Gilbert, micromosaic has struggled to find a place in today’s creation. Still, a new generation of jewellers is reviving it, to the eye’s delight.





*Centaur brooch (c.1840)*

© Collection Faerber. Courtesy GemGenève



Lapis lazuli and aventurine box (c.1850), Vincenzo Raffaelli

© Collection G. Torroni. Courtesy GemGenève

“It is an art that has been forgotten for a while, which requires much patience. Creating an exceptional piece like delicate jewellery or watchmaking can take several years. The same is true of micromosaics, which are a craft and were even considered an art form in their own right when they were first created in the 17<sup>th</sup> century — *Alice Minter*

Even at the end of its golden age, micromosaics offered spectacular works, such as Decio Podio’s Venetian *Tigress*, made between 1880 and 1910 and held in the Arthur and Rosalinde Gilbert Collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum. After Rome’s decline in the micromosaic market, Venice took over for a time. With this work, micromosaic was set free. Decio Podio has taken liberties and bent the glass rods. These new forms breathe life and movement into the work. This is the micromosaic’s most beautiful swan song.

#### The 1960s and the return of micromosaics

It was in the mid-1960s that a passionate amateur began collecting this art form, even though no one was interested in it. “Everyone else was talking about mosaics, but he saw their specificity. He coined the word micromosaic to describe the technique and differentiate it from mosaic,” says Alice Minter, the Victoria & Albert Museum’s curator of the Arthur and Rosalinde Gilbert Collection. Arthur Gilbert has supported many researchers, pushing them to work on the subject. He also made possible the first exhibition of micromosaics in 1975 at the V&A thanks to the generous loan of his collection. He worked hand in hand with Italian dealers who wanted to open up the market for micromosaics internationally. Arthur Gilbert succeeded. On the art market, micromosaics still fetch record prices. He pushed the knowledge and aroused genuine interest in the art market, which is still relevant today,” says the Victoria & Albert Museum curator. Micromosaic has enthusiasts worldwide, particularly in the United States; museums are also beginning to collect it. The Gilbert collection is now one of the three most important collections in the world, the other two being those of the Vatican and the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. The Gilbert collection is, nevertheless, the most diverse and extensive in terms of geography and chronology. “We don’t have the oldest pieces, but they range from the late 1770s to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries,” explains Alice Minter. The variety allows for further research, comparison of the works, their quality and the different ways various artists treat the same subjects.

high jewellery in 2018 and has chosen to “recycle” by incorporating 19<sup>th</sup>-century micromosaics acquired at Christie’s into its baroque sets. Other major houses have chosen micromosaics exclusively, such as the Italian brand La Sibille or SICIS jewels.

#### The mastery of Maurizio Fioravanti

But one of the artists who best illustrates himself in the world of contemporary micromosaics is, without doubt, the Italian Maurizio Fioravanti. Having learned on his own, he has been working for thirty years to revive a long-forgotten tradition. However, the Italian designer has brought a real innovation, particularly in the materials used. Gone are the days of glass, and welcome are the minerals of all kinds that Maurizio Fioravanti gleans from his walks in nature. He creates his colours and supports by combining traditional and contemporary materials, notably carbon. The creation process is particularly lengthy: the jeweller produces no more than ten pieces per year, justifying their high price.

“Maurizio Fioravanti’s jewellery fetches several hundred thousand euros. It is easier to understand this for a diamond than for a micromosaic. That’s why we need to educate people and work toward a better dissemination of knowledge. — *Alice Minter*

#### A beautiful return

For some years, traditions and heritage have interfered in all creative fields. Jewellery and watchmaking are no exception, and it is to micromosaic that the most significant houses have turned with attention. Piaget called on a Roman craftsman descended from the purest tradition to decorate the dial of its legendary *Altiplano* watch. Harry Winston launched its *Precious Micromosaic* series, limited to thirty pieces. Micromosaic navigates between floral and geometric motifs and combines diamonds and cloisonné enamel. This series is part of the Premier collection, created in 1989 to enhance the value of artistic craftsmanship. Gucci entered the world of

Micromosaic is thus well and truly back. After a century of resounding success and years spent in oblivion, the Italian technique has seduced a new generation of creators. It has made its way to the top of the jewellery world.





Gallo-Roman villa at Orbe-Boscéaz

Courtesy Pro Urba Foundation. GemGenève

# DISCUSSIO

Rockah necklace  
Courtesy Strong & Precious, GemGenève



# “JEWELLERY HAS A DIFFERENT POWER THAN WORDS”

Shortly after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Olga Oleksenko and Natasha Kietiene decided to support Ukrainian jewellery design. This is how Strong & Precious — Ukrainian jewellery was born.

The first edition was prepared in less than a month for the spring edition of GemGenève. Olga Oleksenko, thanks to the contacts acquired after more than fifteen years of working for international brands, found in Natasha Kietiene a solid ally to set up this project. The aim is to illustrate Ukrainian creativity's strength despite the situation's horror. For this second edition, Olga Oleksenko and Natasha Kietiene highlight Ukrainian history. Contemporary creations dialogue with their heritage, with freedom as their banner.

## How did you get into the world of jewellery?

**Olga Oleksenko:** It all started in 2004. I was invited to become the brand manager of Kyiv's Piaget and Van Cleef & Arpels boutiques. Then I became a boutique manager — Piaget for five years and Van Cleef & Arpels for twelve years. I was their ambassador for Ukrainian VIP customers. I also started my collection by buying from galleries and auctions such as Sotheby's and Christie's. I had many contacts in the industry, and I was able to buy from them. I had many connections and decided to start a blog, one of the most popular in Ukraine and Russian-speaking countries. I write about the world of jewellery and its “backstage”, about jewellery as an art.

**Natasha Kietiene:** I started in journalism, specialising in jewellery, accessories and watches. I stayed there for fifteen years. Then I started working in communications. In 2015, I decided to work as an independent consultant, especially in jewellery. A year later, I moved to London, where I still live and work as a freelance consultant in communication strategies, PR and marketing for jewellery brands: small independent designers or larger companies.

I lecture and teach at several design schools where I teach young designers how to develop their brands.

## How did your duo start?

**NK:** I gave Olga some advice on her blog using my journalistic and marketing experience. We talked about jewellery, and our discussions eventually led us to build more than a working relationship.

**OO:** We speak the same language and look at jewellery from the same angle. The Russian-speaking world of jewellery is petite. Like-minded people are rare. Natasha was a great contact.

## The first edition of Strong & Precious was presented at GemGenève for the first time in May 2022. How did this partnership come about? How does the adventure begin?

**NK:** It was a very spontaneous project. In the jewellery world, many actors and professionals are not jewellery designers per se, but they are still essential to the jewellery profession. The 3D specialists, the engravers, the people who make sketches or models... They are not as glamorous as the jewellery designers but just as crucial. When the war

started, I received many requests from these professionals who had become refugees and were asking for help to get in touch with European jewellery brands. I realised that European jewellery professionals knew nothing about the Ukrainian design world. They were surprised to discover the high level of their skills, knowledge and vision. I came up with the idea of a project that would pay tribute to this Ukrainian creativity, and I shared it with Olga. We discussed it and realised that the nearest event for the jewellery sector was GemGenève. It was the beginning of April, and GemGenève was scheduled for May. Olga is very close to Thomas Faerber, one of the show's founders. So I invited Olga to contact him. Thomas responded immediately and confirmed his willingness to offer Strong & Precious a stand. That was a shock. So we made two open calls on our Instagram accounts and started collecting jewellery pieces from Ukrainian designers. It was a real adventure. Some designers scattered across Europe; others stayed in Ukraine and collected some works from there.

**OO:** I didn't have the desire to continue writing about jewellery. I had to leave Kyiv and move to Vienna with my children. Jewellery was the last thing on my mind. I received an invitation to an exhibition where I bought pieces for Thomas Faerber. I shared it with Natasha, saying, "Who cares about jewellery now?" She replied that we had to do something. She pushed me to write to Thomas Faerber, and I'm grateful to her. We had less than a month. I didn't want to do it, but she was convincing. **NK:** I was insistent because we are two women in the jewellery business. Jewellery is far from politics and war. It was the only thing we could do from our place. So we did what we did best. That was our contribution to Ukraine at the moment.

**What was the impact of Strong & Precious on the visitors? What effects did the exhibited designers feel?**

**OO:** Many Ukrainians visited our stand. They were touched and inspired by the presence of Ukrainian jewellers at such an important event. We received enthusiastic reactions from the international community. Before the war, I was on the other

side; I worked for international brands. I was amazed by their creativity when I started gleaning pieces from Ukrainian artists.

**NK:** The impact was incredible. It was essential to hear that we were right to organise Strong & Precious. The Ukrainian visitors said: "You give us hope for a normal future." You show us one more reason to be proud of our country. Beauty offers people hope and the will to survive and move forward.

**Has Strong & Precious started a new recognition movement for Ukrainian jewellers? What was the situation before the war?**

**NK:** When we contacted the Ukrainian jewellers, most of them were devastated. Some of them were considering closing their businesses and leaving the jewellery business. The project was a boost for them to enter a new stage of their work. For those presented on the stand, orders were numerous. For the others, Strong & Precious showed them that it was possible to continue working and living. They understood that they could be seen on an international stage and be part of it.

**OO:** We had a great media campaign; the New York Times and many other titles wrote about our artists. We also did some promotions through my blog. Some of the jewellers got new customers. It was an excellent opportunity for them to grow.

**What do you want to highlight for this second edition of Strong & Precious? How did you work?**

**NK:** We had a lot more time for this edition. I was able to do much research with Ukrainian jewellers. After 2004, I learned that 3,000 jewellery brands were born in Ukraine. The exhibition has two main themes: first, tradition. We have chosen unique pieces from designers who work with the idea of tradition: artists

*Jewellery and social media*

Social networks are the new communication tools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Whatever the field, blogs and Instagram accounts are crucial advertising media and means of educating the public. The world of jewellery and watches is no exception. In the Russian-speaking world, Olga Oleksenko is one of the most influential figures in the jewellery world on social networks. The brands presented by Strong & Precious also have a solid online presence. Social networks are the most effective way to reach a large audience for an emerging scene. Gunya Project has 42,500 followers, and Bevza has more than 140,000. Some are more confidential, such as Denis Music Jewellery, with just under 7,000 followers. Nevertheless, the brand remains active and uses Instagram as a privileged platform to dialogue more directly with potential customers. The same goes for specialists such as Vivienne Becker, a jewellery historian, or the New Yorker from Sotheby's, Frank Everett, who has almost 147,000 followers. Social networks or blogs are a way to reach more people to learn differently. More direct, less formal. The network is smaller than fashion, but it gives a "family" dimension that has proved its worth.





Natasha Kietiëne

Courtesy Strong & Precious. GemGenève



Gunia pendant  
Courtesy Strong & Precious. GemGenève

“Jewellery reflects history. Jewellery has a different power than words. Jewellery has its own language, far from a political statement, but still meaningful. — *Olga Oleksenko*

who have developed national themes and motifs; designers who have worked with history in a world. Secondly, we focus on forms close to sculpture and architecture. Because structure, colour and craftsmanship were crucial to the Ukrainian jewellery school in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. At that time, the Ukrainian jewellery school was very influential in Europe. After the 1917 revolution, many Ukrainian workshops moved to France, the United States or Germany. With our exhibition, we want to show that the tradition continues in the work of contemporary designers. We will also present rare pieces by Josef Marchak. This will be a strong note in our exhibition.

**OO:** Our ambition is to show that the Ukrainian jewellery tradition is powerful. Marchak, also known as the “Ukrainian Cartier”, was a native of Kharkiv, the second capital of Ukraine. The jewellery tradition is still strong there. Marchak took this Ukrainian tradition and brought it to Europe after 1917. His talent spread internationally. Our idea is to show our jewellers and the world that art is always an answer when something terrible happens. Strong & Precious wants to connect contemporary jewellery with its heritage.

#### **What are the new trends in Ukrainian jewellery, and who are the emerging talents?**

**NK:** We are introducing two new designers to our selection for this edition. Heritage Project Gunia first of all. Natalya Kamenskaya and Maria Gavrilyuk founded the brand. They work with traditional Ukrainian heritage, not only in jewellery but also in ceramics, fabrics, and embroideries... We will present significant pieces from the Rooster collection, recalling Mariupol’s

bombed-out buildings and the traditional ceramic jugs in the shape of a rooster, the only remnants of life before. These objects, highlighted in photographs circulated in the media, have become symbols of Ukrainian resilience. Heritage Project Gunia has made gold earrings that evoke these zoomorphic jugs. The second designer to join Strong & Precious is Denis Music, who makes brooches. We will also present the Rockah brand, which plays with ancient themes. She has been inspired by the amulet belts of the Kazakhs, ancient Ukrainian traditional warriors, to create her collection. Rings, bracelets and necklaces... We will also present Bevza’s jewellery (they are more fashion than jewellery brand). For the first edition last May, they presented a gold chain in the shape of an ear of wheat. This time they have created an extension of their creation, gold pendants reminding us of the many wheat fields burnt during the war.

**OO:** Our country is making history, and all these pieces are artefacts and testimonies of the events we live through. Contemporary Ukrainian designers are driven by narrative and national heritage, which they reinterpret. Jewellery has a different power than words. Jewellery has its language, far from a political statement, but still meaningful.

#### **What is the place of Ukrainian jewellery on the international market today?**

**NK:** Before the war, there was no real market for Ukrainian jewellery. Ukrainian designers were almost invisible. I hope that with our help, the situation can change and that some galleries, showrooms or shops will notice Ukrainian artisans and decide to showcase them. Ukrainian jewellery is still young; we are currently witnessing its first steps on the international jewellery scene.

**OO:** Ukrainian jewellery designers have enormous potential. They are creative; they all have their style and know-how. It is our role to promote them.

#### **What are the specificities of jewellery curation? What do you look for when you organise a jewellery exhibition?**

**NK:** In the jewellery field, the idea, the design and the know-how are essential for me. I distinguish between concept and design because it is possible to have a beautiful idea without it becoming an actual design and vice versa.

**OO:** Emotion is the first thing I consider when selecting pieces for a project. What I feel directly influences the way I work.

#### **What is the role of social media in today’s jewellery world?**

**OO:** Social media’s role is vital to our business and projects. I felt it before the war when I started giving lectures. When discussing jewellery on Instagram or a blog, you can educate and influence a broader audience. You can offer them the right product or promote artists in the best way. Blogs and Instagram are ways to attract more people.

#### **What has GemGenève brought to Strong & Precious? And what did Strong & Precious get to GemGenève?**

**NK:** We exhibited jewellery with bold contemporary designs and showed them on broken bricks. This was unexpected and new for this fair. GemGenève is a fantastic venue and gave us international professional support, even though we were new.

**OO:** I would like to add that this fair has a very special, young and family atmosphere. I think you can tell that people are happy to be here. I want to thank M<sup>r</sup> Faerber and M<sup>r</sup> Totah for their kindness. Strong & Precious could not have been born without them.





Pendant, Sergey Zhemov

Courtesy Strong & Precious. GemGenève

# PORTFOLIO



## EXPERTISE ABOVE ALL

Michel Kamidian is a member of the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation's committee of experts and a passionate lover of Russian art. He built a collection, favouring research and analysis of each of his works before quantity.

Michel Kamidian was born in Armenia, in the USSR. Fascinated by Greek antiquity and by art in all its forms, he bought books from an early age, and started wandering in the corridors and halls of museums looking for art. "At the age of ten or eleven, I was already going to museums alone," he says. Passionate, he had already started to collect. In his childhood, he was gathering stamps, or tsarist coins, which were prohibited at the time. He explains the difficult and tense context: "Interest in silver and jewellery was not well regarded at the time," while painting, on the other hand, remained prestigious and recognised.

### **The birth of a vocation**

Michel Kamidian arrived in France in the early 1970s, and soon met Garig Basmadjian, who ran a gallery in Paris on Boulevard Raspail. As a world-renowned art collector himself and a renowned specialist in Russian and Armenian iconography, Garig Basmadjian introduced Michel Kamidian to Drouot and its auction rooms. In the 1980s, he started developing an actual collection. Focusing on Russian art in general, as well as Fabergé and the jeweller's contemporaries, it was guided by a sure eye, built up by time and experience. For to collect, one must "have an eye", he explains.

For Michel Kamidian, it is not just about buying objects. His practice is above all developed through research and documentation, to find sources of information and other archives. "This is essential for a collector," he stresses.

His approach to collecting goes hand in hand with the desire to transmit and make known Russian art

through loans and the organisation of exhibitions. He participated in the very first event dedicated to Fabergé in Russia in 1989, right before the dissolution of the USSR. "The Great Fabergé, the art of the jewelers of the court firm", at the Elaguine Palace, presented pieces by the jeweller. In 1992, he was curator and co-organiser of the "Fabulous Epoque of Fabergé" at the Catherine Palace, in Tsarskoe Selo (residence of the tsars). He also partly enabled the statues of the Russian ballets to become known through the rediscovery of the sculptor Boris Frödman-Cluzel, a famous artist and craftsman who worked for Fabergé and had fallen into oblivion.

### **A damaged collection: the case of *D' Metzger's Egg***

November 1991, Geneva. Sotheby's organised an auction and, among the lots, the *D' Metzger egg clock*, made of nephrite and gilded silver. Michel Kamidian was the last bidder and won the piece, which he later proved to be an imperial Fabergé egg. A few years later, a Russian expert and historian of the house of Carl Fabergé found the evidence that definitively

proved the authenticity and provenance of the object.

As a result, in 2000, the collector was contacted for an exhibition in Wilmington, USA, to which he lent his collection of Russian works. Among them was the jade clock, insured for

three million euros. Exported across the Atlantic, the difficulties began. At the end of the event, the egg was in transit in London and returned damaged. After several trips to London for legal proceedings, with sudden disagreements about the provenance of the egg and, finally,

the judgement, Michel Kamidian found himself in dire straits, although he was supported by Tatiana Fabergé, Carl Fabergé's great-granddaughter: "I then had to sell part of my collection."

The loan had serious repercussions on Michel Kamidian's collection, and a major impact on his life. The event also definitely exposed a fundamental problem, already perceived before: the difficulty of proving, validating or contradicting the provenance of an object, despite expertise built on years of research.

### *3 questions to... Amanda Triossi*

Amanda Triossi is a jewellery historian. She worked with Bulgari from 1996 to 2016 and initiated the creation of its heritage collection.

#### **How did the idea of creating a Heritage collection at Bulgari intervene?**

This idea, among houses, to buy back heritage was launched by Cartier, around 1985. They were the first to understand the importance of creating a heritage collection. At the time, I was working at Sotheby's and every time an important piece came up for auction, Cartier bought it back. In 1994, I was commissioned by Bulgari to write their first monograph, but they had not kept any pieces and were not interested in the past. I, on the other hand, had a historical perspective. In 1998 they asked me to create an archive and I gradually started to catalogue the designs, establishing criteria and classifying the different objects. In 2006, I managed to recover a piece, worn by Keira Knightley, who had made all the headlines—it had been auctioned off in 1994, but Bulgari didn't want to buy it at the time—it was then that the company realised the great value of vintage jewellery and in 2009 we organised the first major retrospective exhibition in Rome, with over 600 pieces.

#### **What is the interest of building a heritage collection for jewellery houses?**

From the 1980s and 1990s onwards, jewellery began to be considered more and more as an art form, perceived through its artistic value and therefore placed on a historical scale, as an object of study, with an evolution. So, collecting for these houses was a fairly natural step. Another reason comes from the fact that the big brands today no longer belong to their original family and are part of large groups, such as LVMH, Richmond, Kering... The question of identity becomes very important. It is no longer M<sup>r</sup> Cartier, M<sup>r</sup> Bulgari or M<sup>r</sup> Boucheron at the helm, so the big groups need to display their heritage, to show it to the public. In this sense, they maintain their DNA.

#### **What are the characteristics of the jewels in the Bulgari collection?**

In principle, the most iconic pieces from Bulgari are made of yellow gold. The house has, one could say, a real love affair with the cabochon, which is not faceted, and uses coloured gemstones without regard to their intrinsic value. It can mix emeralds and amethysts with diamonds, for example. For the cabochon, there is this idea of volume, which comes into play from the 1960s. In 1971, Bulgari opened a boutique in the United States and there was a whole trend linked to Pop Art, and then the use of antique pieces, which was introduced by Bulgari in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The idea existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with other jewellers, but its reuse echoes the postmodernist movement that spread into art and architecture. In the 1980s, jewellery became more voluminous and highly structured, symmetrical. Let's say that if you really have to narrow it down, Bulgari's common thread from the 1960s onwards can be summed up in three ingredients: yellow gold, colour and highly structured, three-dimensional, design.

#### **Defending Fabergé's work**

Michel Kamidian puts his heart and soul into protecting the name of Fabergé and his works, a complex and difficult task for several reasons. "At the head of each Fabergé workshop, a master goldsmith controlled the production and sometimes put his mark on it. You can't really know what is made by Fabergé himself, but the quality of execution of the objects produced on behalf of the jeweller is perfect, and always the same," explains Michel Kamidian. At the time, a new bourgeoisie was developing in Europe, and the influence and prestige of the Russian jeweller attracted attention and aroused envy. In Germany, workshops copied the pieces to sell them at a lower cost. As a result, the market today contains many fakes, not necessarily recognised as such by experts.

This is the battle that Michel Kamidian is waging: "The problem today is the lack of knowledge about Fabergé's work." The gap is due to a lack of resources, which can be explained by looking at the history and the situation in the USSR at the time. Some works were indeed frowned upon or banned at the time: "Thirty years ago, we realised that there were holes in the knowledge of museum curators. No one had studied the art of the jewellers or the court suppliers. As a result, there was a problem of expertise." When Russia opened up, a market for the country's works already





Michel Kamidian  
Courtesy GemGenève

## PORTRAIT

“You can be passionate, it doesn’t require expertise. You like it, you buy it. But when you are in contact with art objects that have been created, that have a history, that’s another thing.” — *Michel Kamidian*

existed in Europe, London and the United States. For Michel Kamidian, errors remained, and nowadays the dissemination of Russian art still suffers from a lack of documentation.

When he was living in Russia, Michel Kamidian used to visit the Palace of Armour on several occasions. Located in Moscow, within the Kremlin, the museum is rich with imperial treasures and works by Carl Fabergé. “It was complicated to get inside, not many people could do it. But I was a guide, so I was able to visit the museum,” he says. Although today the Russian public can easily access it, at the time, museums of this kind were mainly open to foreign visitors. Having trained his eye as closely as possible to Russian creation, for him the difficulty does not stand in distinguishing the real from the fake: “What poses a problem today is that the foundations are inaccurate.” As a connoisseur of Russian works of art and museums, he often notices errors in the provenance and authenticity of certain works.

Michel Kamidian is also a member of the Igor Carl Fabergé Foundation. Regarding his activity as a collector, he stresses: “The most important thing is to determine the origin attributed to something, which takes time. A good collector has to know a lot of things, even more than the experts who practise. Anyone can say they are an expert.” A life’s vocation, guided by a relentless search of recognition for works that fascinate and animate him.





Gold "Samorodok" cigarette-case

© Horovitz and Totah. Courtesy Igor Carl Fabergé. GemGenève

# WANTS





## VALUES AT THE HEART OF THE JEWELLERY MARKET

Stable and durable, the jewellery sector is attracting more and more buyers, despite the health crisis and the prolonged closure of its shops. A growing market, adapting to the times and the needs of its customers.

Marked by the Covid pandemic, the markets throughout the world are just recovering from a crisis which, if it restrained growth and sales in most sectors, also enabled companies to take pause and reflect on their business. Hence, it enabled them to accelerate the transition to digitisation, revising their structuring, and better adapt to new demands and new needs. Where does the jewellery market stand today? Here is an overview of the current situation and a look at the values and challenges of this sector.

### **A new momentum in the market**

While the health crisis has severely impacted the global economy, the art world has immediately bounced back to exceed its 2019 figures, according to the famous annual report by Clare McAndrew, delivered last March for Art Basel. For jewellery, the consequences were more severe, with a 10-15% decline in its sales worldwide. This is hardly surprising, given that the market is largely based on luxury tourism, which has slowed to a crawl, or even completely stopped, during several trying months. The situation is still tense, particularly in China, where the lockdowns lasted until late and are still disturbing the peace of consumers and merchants. The digital transition too is actually much slower than in the contemporary art sector. To this, Benoît Repellin, world director of the jewellery sector at Philips, counters: “For a painting, you have the dimensions, you have the colours, you can still picture the piece even if it is not the same. For jewellery, the emotion is different when you have the piece in front of you.” Because the object is three-dimensional, exists in space, diffracts light, its hue is perpetually varying. This is a reality that is difficult to translate into online sales, even if it is expected to grow in the coming years.

“It’s a market that is still growing and holding its own,” comments Benoît Repellin. A statement also confirmed by analyses of the sector, which promise market growth of 3 to 4% each year between now and 2025. The annual report *State of Fashion: Watches and Jewelry* produced by McKinsey in collaboration with Business of Fashion indicates that it could even exceed its pre-pandemic figures, especially since the jewellery industry was experiencing a marked development at that time, which began in 2015 and extended until 2019. In 2020, France recorded a 5% decline in jewellery — and a 22% decline in watches, a field more severely affected. Overall, that year, its global figure was €22 billion, with China still leading the way, followed by the United States and India. In France, exports fell by 37% and imports by 41%. The following year, however, sales picked up again, increasing by 21%, with a turnover of €3.9 billion, i.e. €1.1 billion more than in 2020. In fact, by 2026, the industry expects an estimated increase up to €315b, when it was standing at €235b in 2020.

### 3 questions to... Benoît Repellin

Benoît Repellin is the global director of the jewellery department at Phillips.

#### Could you say a few words about your work?

One of the facets of my job that fascinates me is the link that we become in the jewellery's story. From its discovery to its sale, we participate in the history of each jewel and become a link in the chain. The auction process allows us to follow this evolution of the piece, from its discovery with the expertise and the estimate, to the sale and the transmission to a new owner. When we estimate a jewel, we enter into the intimacy of the customers. Indeed, a jewel is something very personal, often given for special occasions by a loved one, and customers reveal in most cases very willingly, without us even asking, this provenance and this strong sentimental side.

#### How do you estimate a piece of jewellery?

I often consider three main factors for the valuation of a jewel that I group under three denominations: nature, art and provenance. Nature designates the stones used, from the earth and enhanced by the hand of man, the cutter who magnifies the beauty of these gifts of nature, optimising the colour of the stone, keeping the maximum weight while removing inclusions that would have devalued the gem. Art qualifies the realisation of the jewel, the manufacturing, the work behind the finished piece of jewellery. Then comes into play the fact that the jewel is signed, or not, from a known house, that the design of the piece is typical of the time in which it was created, with a finesse in the design and in the quality of the realisation. Jewels characteristic of a certain period and bearing the signature of a major jewellery house are the most sought after by collectors. Finally, comes the provenance. If a jewel belonged to a famous or historical person, the value would be considerably changed. The jewel is the witness of a story, of the past and if its memory is attached to a page of great history or a celebrity, then the price reached on sale will be much higher than a jewel without known provenance. The combination of these three factors makes them exceptional pieces. And this is what will generate the interest of collectors.

#### How did you select the pieces exhibited for your upcoming sales?

We are exhibiting a selection of pieces from our Hong Kong and New York sales in Geneva from 2 to 9 November. We will first be at the Hôtel La Réserve from 2 to 6 November, alongside GemGenève, and we will be exhibiting the jewels alongside the watches from our Geneva sales on 5 and 6 November. Then we will present the pieces by appointment at our offices, rue de la Confédération, from 7 to 9 November. Our Hong Kong sales will be on 27 November and New York sales on 13 December. The Geneva exhibition will present a selection of pieces illustrating the variety of jewels and stones offered in our sales and which corresponds to the European market but also to the international market, given that many customers will be in Geneva for GemGenève and the sales season. To name a few jewels, we will present a *Fancy Intense Yellow* diamond of 30.65 carats, a *Fancy Intense Pink* diamond of 2.04 carats, a pair of *Fancy Green* diamonds of one carat each, all from a particular collection, but also an exceptional Burmese ruby of more than 6 carats, with jewels from the Art Deco era, and signed pieces.

Of the top-selling items in the jewellery and watchmaking sector, gold jewellery leads with 38.2% of sales. Watches follow with 31.6%, then gold-plated silver jewellery with 15.1%, and finally fashion jewellery with 10.3%. Type-wise, bracelets take the lead with 25% of sales, followed by necklaces with 21%. Pearls and pendants represent 20%, rings 18%. Finally, earrings account for 16% of sales. Among the preferred brands, the big houses remain a minority on the market. McKinsey, the data analysis firm, comments: "Despite the prominence of these icons, branded jewellery remains a small minority of the market, accounting for only 20% of revenues," but argues: "Going forward, they should become more and more successful. Branded jewellery will account for 25-30% of the market by 2025, and the sums involved are considerable: \$80-100 billion are at stake."

#### Value of jewellery: between provenance and history

The value of a piece of jewellery is a combination of several dimensions that are juxtaposed to establish its price on the market. In addition to the quality of the original material, and the work of man on it, a third aspect, less tangible, more emotional, is linked to the history of the object, its journey. But first, let's go back to the source, to the mines that are sometimes the source of extraordinary precious stones. Benoît Repellin returns to the criteria that tend to establish the quality of a stone, which must have "a good colour, good purity, of a certain weight" and avoid having too many inclusions or being heated — an artificial treatment on sapphires and rubies aimed at enlivening the colour and increasing the



SERENDIPITY  
PARIS





transparency of the stone. While the process is often used and commonly accepted within the jewellery market, it remains the hallmark of a lower-grade gem. To the naked eye, however, the appearance is the same, highlighting the undeniably symbolic dimension at work, also constitutive to the value of a jewel, which is established in its rarity. A phenomenon that Benoît Repellin explains in particular with regard to emeralds: “Colombian emeralds have been used for thousands of years, so it remains attached to the collective imaginary, an emerald must come from Colombia.”

After extraction comes the cutting, which is carried out in several stages and will give the stone its size and number of carats. When well done, the gem is enabled to have its best assets brought out while being kept at a maximum weight, from roughing to cementing, to cutting and polishing. To evaluate the quality of a diamond's cut, the Gemological Institute of America has developed a grading system divided into five categories. Brilliance, shimmer and sparkle are the three measures used to classify diamonds, from “excellent” (EX), which represents 3% of the total diamond production, to “poor” (“P”, for “poor cut”), which describes diamonds that do not reflect light at all. After this artisanal work, the art blossoms in the hands of the jewellers. “The art side is the creation of the jewel, its entire conception, both in design and execution, its finesse,” explains Benoît Repellin.

If the previous stages can be quantified, observed, and estimated by tools, the last one, impalpable, remains difficult to define. Benoît Repellin observes: “Regarding provenance, what adds value is when there is a historical side. If it is a jewel from the 1920s, the 1950s, or the *Belle Époque*, it is added to the catalogue because this kind of detail can be

interesting for collectors or buyers.” This historical value gives its depth to the object, worn on the neck, on the finger, on the wrist, at the heart of intimacy and people's lives. It contains a specific density charged with emotions, accompanying the stories and memories of a person, a family, or even a nation. This is the effect of the jewels of kings or emperors which, when presented at auction, sometimes provoke bidding battles, as was the case with Marie-Antoinette's pendant in 2018, sold for €31.8m.

But how does a sale take place? Benoît Repellin explains: “Regarding the different stages that lead to the sale, there is, first of all, a meeting with the client to estimate the piece for the auction. If the gemstones appear to be of superior quality, the jewel is sent to a laboratory to issue a certificate of analysis. The estimate, too, tends to be attractive to generate interest among buyers while reflecting the value of a property because it is a question of getting everyone to agree. “It's a fair balance to find”, comments Benoît Repellin. Estimate price and reserve price are then confirmed, and if the auction does not reach the reserve price which aims to establish a minimum value of the object for sale, necessarily lower than the low estimate, the sale does not close. If an agreement is reached, however, the jewel is entrusted to the auction house, and then catalogued, described, photographed. These elements then appear in the sales catalogue. “For important pieces, we organise a travelling exhibition prior to the sale, to present the jewels to different customers around the world. Then we have an exhibition at the place where the sale takes place. Open to the public, it allows customers to admire the pieces,” he says. “When the final bid occurs and the jewel is sold, a new owner enters the scene and a new page in the history of the jewel is written.”

### **Vintage vs innovation: trends of today and tomorrow**

If there is a trend taking precedence today in all spheres of art and design, it is the vintage one. Between recovery of materials and creative inspiration, the jewels of yesterday influence the creation of the present... To the benefit of auction houses. A recycling practice related to the industry, which allows metals to be recast and the gems of old jewellery to be reassembled on more contemporary models. The phenomenon extends to the taste for ancient stones. Benoît Repellin explains this effect on gemstones tinted by the time: “For a long time you were told ‘you have to recut, make a classic brilliant cut’, which is no longer the case today. There is really a search for this ancient aspect, and the charm of old stone.” The same goes for signed jewellery from the last century, reflecting history, or a particular era. Similarly, among young buyers, interest is turning to “heritage” brands and timeless models to be worn over the long term.

This trend, which is becoming increasingly stronger today, is arguably related to the challenges of our time and the issues affecting ecology and sustainable development — words that have been on everyone's lips for some time [see p.74]. Jewellery brands are no exception, especially when the source of their production is found at the bottom of mines, the exploitation of which, accused of perpetuating wars, conflicts and poverty for local populations. For some major brands, like Tiffany, the transparency criterion became one of their primary concerns, certifying the origin of the stones, from the mine to the store. An initiative undertaken by other young houses to prove their commitment through traceability, revealing their production chain for more responsibility on human and

## ANALYSIS

ecological levels. These new approaches allow the industry to respond to current issues, and for brands to remain relevant to their customers as well as attracting new ones, sensitive to the preservation of natural resources. This is evidenced by the increase in the sale of synthetic diamonds, which represented 3.5% of sales in 2020 and continues to increase.

At the heart of jewellery houses, another battle is being played out between the big brands and the smaller ones. The firsts rather bet on their heritage, with the absence of risk taking occasionally reproached to them, by profiting from their global and historical influence with new jewels endlessly reproducing a visual identity that has ceased to evolve. Hence the interest for younger, creative and inspired brands that present original, innovative, experimental pieces, playing with noble and non-noble metals alike, alloys and shapes — we think in particular of Emefa Cole, using 100% recycled metals, mixing materials and techniques through designs precisely inspired by geology and the earth.

The jewellery market is undeniably expanding, reaching out to younger and younger generations. According to the Boston Consulting Group report, millennials should represent half of consumption in the luxury sector within a few years. From a territorial point of view, the Asian region is a sales lever, with annual growth of 10 to 14% in the field of jewellery, and representing 45% of global turnover. Benoît Repellin comments: “We have a younger clientele who are interested in jewellery. And globally too, in Asia, even in Europe, we manage to see new customers who are interested in jewellery and auctions.” For previous generations, the jewellery market, stable, long-lasting and generally escaping the dynamics of speculation, also made it possible to invest in another way. In short, the jewellery market still has a bright future ahead.

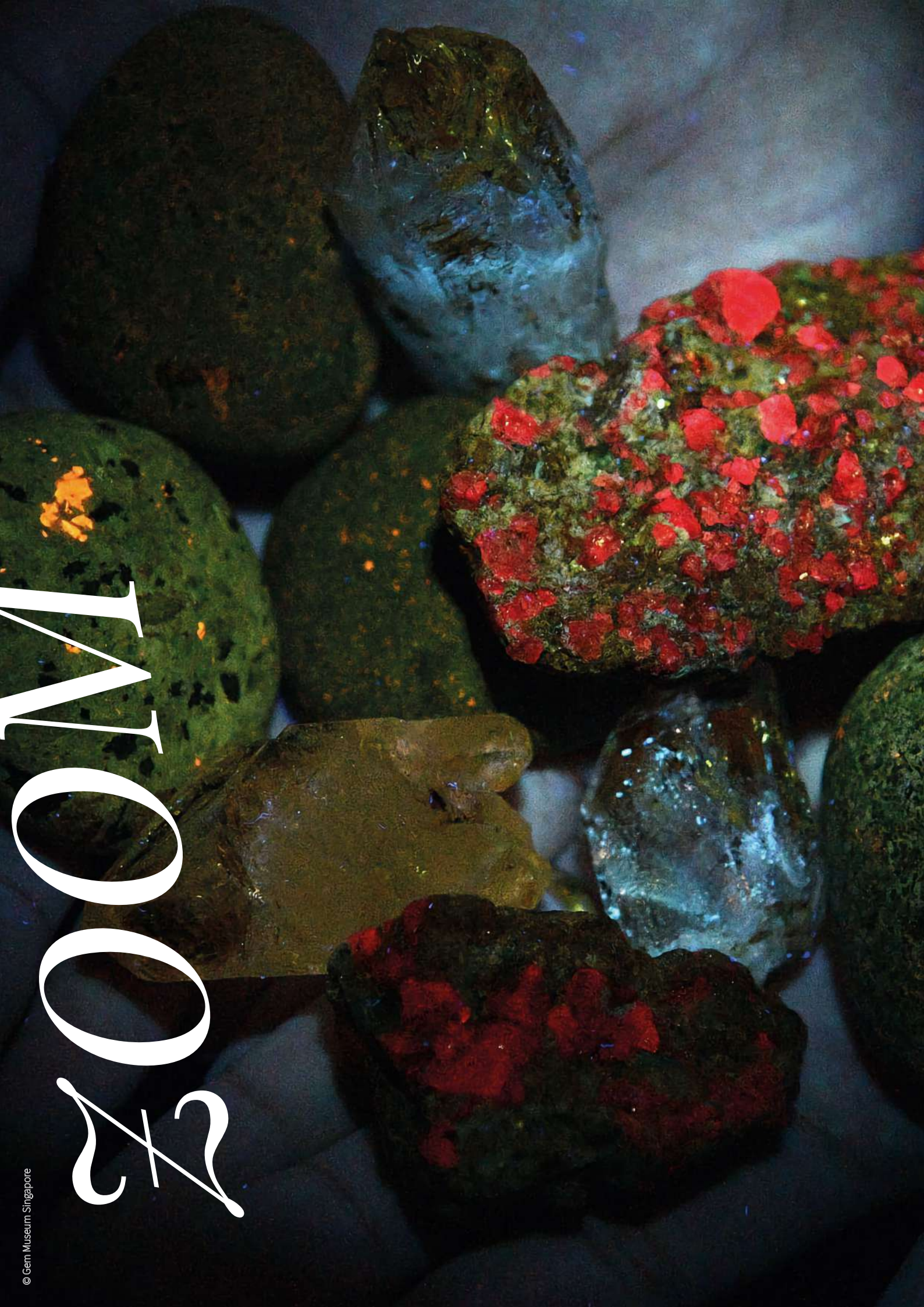




*Heron Ring, Irina Okutova*

© Irina Okutova. Courtesy GemGenève

# ATOM





## MODERN GEMMOLOGY IN ALL ITS FORMS

Developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gemmology is the science of precious stones. It takes us to the heart of the earth and immemorial times, from their formation and extraction, to the jewellery houses today.

Crystals are formed in the rocks and underground corridors of our planet to become precious stones, the subject of study in the science known as gemmology. Once used as currency, they have always been attributed magical properties and some of them are still believed in today. Their brilliant and coloured appearance, their source, their rarity, are as many elements that give them a value shared by a collective imagination, beyond territorial and cultural borders. Cut, polished and mounted on jewellery, precious stones are cultivated and prized by jewellers throughout the world. Let's take a trip back to the origins of these small stones and the foundations of modern gemmology.

### **A brief overview of gems and precious stones**

What makes a gemstone precious? The name applies to a natural material and refers to a limited group of four gems with defined and delimited properties: diamonds, often transparent-white or yellow, but sometimes appearing in other shades, as well as sapphire, renowned for its blue colour-which can actually take on any hue except red, reserved for ruby, the third stone on the list. The green emerald closes the inventory. The other stones with recognised aesthetic qualities are called "fine stones" or sometimes "semi-precious stones", with the exception of organic stones. These, as their name indicates, do not come from minerals, but from living organisms, such as amber, coral, mother-of-pearl or pearls. A great diversity of gems, and a thousand and one different shades.

Gems come from a variety of sources and are sometimes discovered by chance. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was the case with the deposits in Kashmir, west of the Himalayas: a landslide led to

the discovery of a mine of sapphires of an incomparable deep blue. Each stone is usually linked to its own region of the world, and although they exist elsewhere, certain territories in particular have very specific characteristics that give the stones their value—an aesthetic one, apparently subjective but broadly shared. Emeralds in Colombia, for example, and rubies in Myanmar. If the reputation of other sites is less prestigious, Africa remains a fertile territory, in Mozambique, Zambia and Madagascar, to which jewellers are now turning to in order to make their pieces. Because like everything that is produced naturally, the best spots get rapidly depleted...

Although their qualities differ according to their geography, gems are similar to each other in terms of hardness, assessed on the Mohs scale; their purity, classified by grade from A to AAA (an AAA stone is considered to be flawless and without asperity or defect); and their chemical composition, which determines both the crystallisation system and the physical properties of a mineral. The latter aspect having developed in

### *Singapore's Gem Museum*

Opened in 2015, the Gem Museum is the first museum dedicated to gemmology in Singapore. Its mission is to educate and raise awareness by offering a journey through stones. From their formation on earth millions of years ago to their extraction, then to their arrival on the jewellery market, the museum traces their journey through several hundred pieces. The initiative aims to provide information on this little-known science in order to discover its beauty and the many issues it involves, in geology, history, economics or aesthetics.

The museum is the brainchild of Kunming Tay and Huiying Loke, a couple from Singapore who share a passion for gemmology. Both experts in precious stones, they began their career fifteen years ago, and noticed the absence of a place for the public to learn about gemstones. For them, the most important thing is to create a story, that of the stone, and to build a resource space open to all. Since 2015, they have been working to raise the profile of their museum, both in Singapore and internationally, and have succeeded in accrediting their institution, now recognised by the city.

The Gem Museum will showcase a five-steps tour at GemGenève, from the formation of the stone to the most important mines, drawing up an interactive map of the world for children and adults alike. Many pieces are also exhibited, among which rubies, sapphires, diamonds and other precious stones with fascinating properties. A treasure trove of information, fun and educational, at the heart of the fair.

or a diamond cutter for diamonds, makes it possible to obtain a certain brilliance, to highlight the stone, and to keep a maximum of carat, that is to say of weight. A thin line and a balance that even experts sometimes find difficult to achieve.

Beyond the natural properties of a stone, the hand of man necessarily intervenes to sublimate it. Before going through these processes, the minerals are said to be "raw". They are then cut: faceting allows the light to propagate and diffract in a particular form. There are many different cuts, including round, oval, pear, cushion, emerald, heart, princess, triangle and marquise, to name but a few, and their purpose is to magnify each component, such as the colour or the brilliance of a gem. "Of course, when they are used in jewellery, you want the stones to be as clear, as bright as possible," comments Kunming Tay.

modern times, it is at this time that the possibility of a precise classification system appeared, allowing the science of gemmology to develop to what it is today.

#### **Beauty above all**

If precious, fine or organic stones are remarkable, it is because they are beautiful, of a natural beauty, synthetically unequalled. And for good reason: their formation dates back several million years for some of them, even billions for the very first diamonds. The question of aesthetics and beauty certainly has to do with taste, fashion and subjectivity, but it brings together a range of characteristics that various organisations around the world have helped to define in a relatively harmonious way. In the United States, the Gemological Institute of America (GIA), established in the 1950s, proposed the four-Cs system: colour, clarity, cut and carat. Kunming Tay, director of the Gem Museum in Singapore and a gemmologist [see box], explains: "People tend to buy rubies from Myanmar because culturally and historically, they were acknowledged as the most shimmering and vibrant colour." For this reason, pigeon's blood for rubies, or cornflower blue for sapphires, are particularly prized. Clarity, i.e. a smooth, uneven appearance, is also favoured. The cutting and polishing then, which are processes carried out by a lapidary,

Stones must absolutely shine and be flawless, so they go through processes that act directly on the material components within the stone itself. To enhance a dull shine, a sapphire can be heated. To the naked eye, its colour becomes vibrant, but it loses its value after laboratory examination, the natural component always taking precedence over artificial alterations. Similarly, resin can be applied on cracks to smooth the surface of a gem, however the process is automatically detected under the microscope. "To clarify and enhance, oil can be put inside, or other materials can be used to hide inclusions, which are gaps in the

*"We want to share the science of gemmology. It is not only about gems, but also about geography, geology, economics, design, creativity..."* — *Kunming Tay*



“Sometimes, especially in sapphires when they are not heated, you can see different colours, like galaxies in the gems. But to the naked eye it looks like dots or lines. It looks like a very big flaw.”

— *Kunming Tay*

stone that people want to fill so they don't see them,” says Kunming Tay.

### Scientific aesthetics

Aesthetic appreciation of a stone is one thing, and the science of gemmology can attest to its qualities. However, Kunming Tay points out, “Most people look at them for their beauty, but we look beyond that. We look for inclusions.” While jewellers prefer to cover up the rough edges and hide them, from a scientific point of view, that is where the interest in these minerals lies. He adds: “People usually focus on the design of the jewel and that kind of thing, but few see the science and the different phenomena of the stone.”

So what is an inclusion? A defect to be erased for some, or the cracks on the surface and inside the stones, which gemmologists are particularly interested in. Other phenomena highlight these irregularities, which are not necessarily badly perceived by the world of art and craft—some of them, in fact, can even give value, a particular cachet, to a piece—but these considerations are rather aesthetics while science looks for reasons behind the effects. This is the case for asterisms, a six-pointed star effect highlighted by the light, diffracting into lines around the inclusion, or another one known as the cat's eye effect that usually appears on chrysoberyl. For others, intrinsic to their physical properties, a change in colour can be perceived by the naked eye, depending on luminosity levels, on alexandrites for instance. On opals, again, a myriad of hues can appear with the phenomenon of the play

of colour, revealed by light, and the stone goes from red to green, passing through blue or orange.

Revealing the strangeness of a thousand-year-old nature, the inclusions and other phenomena are also traces, and as many testimonies exploited, studied and examined by scientists to understand our earth. “All these inclusions contain data on our planet at the time the gems were formed,” reveals Kunming Tay. He adds: “You can think of the gems as USB sticks. They continue the history of our world. There is still a lot of information we haven't discovered yet.” The stones thus prove to be valuable, often untapped, knowledge resources. By erasing the inclusions, some might get lost forever.

### Gemmology today: what is at stake?

In a globalised world where exchanges are constant, one of the issues at stake for gemmologists is the harmonisation of their practices. What standards should laboratories follow? Kunming Tay explains: “Sometimes one lab will certify pigeon's blood colour, while another will not. There are many laboratories located all over the world, and harmonising them is a real problem.” To overcome this difficulty, the CIBJO, the world jewellery confederation, has set up standards, accepted by some forty countries, and continues to work to establish a single set of rules which would be followed by everyone. This benefits jewellery customers by ensuring the value of gems and their global recognition.

Provenance also remains an issue, as the source of some gems can be difficult to determine depending on the country and the proximity of certain territories prior to Pangea, as the stones were already being formed millions of years ago. Here too, the issue is to harmonise data between laboratories, which could be helped by new technologies such as NFT. At the heart of discussions today in the art world, they represent tools that can already be used by both market players and scientists to record data linked to objects, and made available to all.

The science of gemmology, still young in many ways, is thus facing the challenges of our time, intrinsically linked to climatic hazards and natural phenomena. It comes from stones, and is revealed through mines sometimes discovered on the surface of the earth. The science, a modern one, promises many more discoveries about our world and the way it evolves.





# WEDFAKULL





## ETHICS AND ECOLOGY: NEW CHALLENGES FOR CONTEMPORARY JEWELLERY

Eco-responsibility, ethics, sustainability... In many fields, these concepts question the need to operate differently, in line with values that are more respectful of the environment and human beings. The world of jewellery is no exception.

In recent years, a turning point seems to have been reached in the jewellery world. From mining to finished jewellery, the entire production chain is being scrutinised. The aim? To find a balance in this paradoxical market and listen to the wishes of a clientele increasingly concerned about its social and ecological impact. The notion of ethics implies a reflection on human behaviour, of the effects it can have on an individual or collective level. In the world of jewellery, this question must consider the treatment of workers and the repercussions of this economy on local communities and their environment. We must broaden our definition of sustainability and ethics in an increasingly globalised world. While from a Western perspective, mining is often perceived as polluting and unscrupulous in terms of human labour, sociologists Hilson and Lahiri-Dutt have recently demonstrated the positive impact of these activities on people. These notions are, therefore, ambivalent and must be handled with discernment and caution.

First and foremost, it is necessary to distinguish the various stages and actors involved in creating a piece of jewellery. The issue of raw materials is perhaps the most important, as it is the source. In the latter, the extraction of gold differs from that of gemstones — in which it is essential to separate gemstones, semi-precious stones and diamonds. However, there is a paradox. Extraction, by definition, changes an environment profoundly. It involves human resources. So how can this process — crucial for jewellery — be associated with an ethical and eco-responsible dimension? There is a real lack of clarity in this area, which is more or less deliberately maintained because of the confidentiality of the market. But despite this,

certain actors are mobilising, aware that the world of jewellery is a small community, a chain, and that the impetus of a single link allows the rest to take a fairer direction.

### **Labels, associations: strength in numbers**

Initiatives to regulate the extraction and trade of precious stones began in the early 2000s. Diamonds were the first to be targeted with the creation of the Kimberley Process: a protocol that guarantees that diamonds are not linked to any armed conflict. In 2003, 81 countries were already following the Kimberley Process. Today, more than 85 countries — with the European Union and its 27 member states counting as one participant — are part of the association. The Kimberley Process aims to 'stop or prevent the financing of wars through the illegal sale of diamonds, commonly known as blood diamonds. There are, of course, flaws — particularly on the issue of child labour or unfair remuneration of workers — but the Kimberley Process, with its 85 member states, curbs a good fraction of the bad practices in the diamond market. It highlights some

grey areas and educates all trade participants to the consumers, who are perhaps the first vectors of change. The customer creates the demand, and informing them about ethical behaviour helps to create a movement that spills over into all areas of the jewellery industry.

In 2004, the Alliance for Responsible Mining — or ARM — was founded. Thanks to this non-profit association, the Fairmined label was founded. This label certifies fair trade gold extracted under conditions more respectful of the environment and male and female miners. It “certifies the provenance of gold produced by small-scale, artisanal mines that meet leading global standards for responsible practices,” according to their website. Many large and small jewellery brands now use Fairmined gold, as does Chopard. These initiatives are necessary because they allow for the development of more conscious mining organisations that invest in community projects and infrastructure in circular and virtuous logic. The label is also a way to reassure and inform consumers — through a comprehensive and educational website and awareness campaigns.

On a more global level, leaving the specifics of gold and diamonds behind, the Responsible Jewellery Council brings together some 1,000 companies and suppliers in the world of jewellery and watchmaking. Like the Fairmined label, the primary aim of this organisation is to promote responsible behaviour and support “ethical, social and environmental” business policies. To be a member, a code of practice [see box p.81] must be adhered to, which leads to certification — the latter ensures that the entire chain “from mining to retail” is safe. The Responsible Jewellery Council covers — in addition to gold, diamonds and platinum-coloured gems and silver. Members include the big names in jewellery such as Chaumet, Piaget, Pomellato and, Van Cleef & Arpels. The Responsible Jewellery Council seeks to move the world of fine jewellery towards greater sustainability. The aim is to set standards and provide tools to raise awareness among professionals and consumers. Across the Atlantic, other similar initiatives have emerged at the same time, such as Ethical Metalsmiths. This American non-profit association is a fundamental resource for education and positive action. The founders, Niki Grandics and Susan Kingsley, promote responsible sourcing, manufacturing, and transparency between the mine and the market.

From mining to production, jewellery involves many, sometimes opaque, steps. Certifications and labels allow companies to embark on a path of change. They are tools that start a positive movement at the beginning of the chain, i.e. the extraction of minerals and gems; they also help dispel the process’s cloudiness despite the market’s necessary confidentiality.

the sourcing of the former is more industrial, extraction is often more artisanal for the latter. In terms of ecological impact, for diamonds, the ratio is 1,700 tonnes of rock extracted for one carat of diamond, i.e. 1,700 tonnes for some 0.20 grams. It is easy to imagine the environmental and human damage that results. Some mines, most of which are certified by the labels mentioned, have set up various systems combining social and ecological responsibilities.

In Burma, in the Mogok region, for example, where a mining company has adopted a circular model. The extraction system is organised in stages according to the level of the river. A rotation is made regularly, allowing the miners to find larger stones, which decrease in size as they descend near the riverbed. And although the workers are not paid by the hour, it allows them to work on different levels and find larger stones they can sell on the market at reasonable prices. Gemmologist Lauriane Lognag explains this in more detail on her blog.

These systems are more easily implemented in artisanal mines where miners are generally independent and extract minerals using their resources — i.e. by hand. The ecological impact is, therefore, lower — this applies mainly to coloured gemstones. Artisanal

Jewellery is ultimately very environmentally friendly, as it is highly recyclable. You can melt the gold and reuse it or set the stones differently. — *Amanda Triossi*

### Ecology, ethics and mining: a paradox?

When you put these three words together, you sometimes smile. How can eco-responsibility, ethics and extraction be combined when the latter, by definition, comes to exploit an area, clearing out anything that might hinder the extraction of precious materials? This mining activity generally requires human labour, which is not always paid at a level commensurate with the harshness of the task. What about sustainability at this early stage of production? In the first instance, it is necessary to distinguish between metals and stones. For example, the latter’s extraction is less polluting than gold, which uses mercury. It is also essential to differentiate between diamonds and delicate and precious stones in gems. While

miners often work on a seasonal basis to support themselves in areas where agriculture is not feasible. According to a report by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), 20% of the world’s gold supply is produced by the artisanal mining sector, 80% of the world’s gem supply and 20% of the world’s diamond supply.









*Isilde ring*

© Paulette à bicyclette



There are many legal and ethical artisanal mines in Africa (notably Tanzania), Sri Lanka and Australia and associations that support miners, such as the Tanzania Women's Mining Association (TAWOMA).

Other initiatives are helping to offset its negative environmental impacts, such as the Lake Manyara site, which Yanni Melas, CEO of Gemexplorer, mentioned at the AERC webinar in February. No remnants of the mining operation are visible; everything has been covered by vegetation planted to minimise the environmental impact. "You would never guess that this site may have been a mining scene at one time. It looks like a film set," says Yanni Melas. Sustainable and responsible sourcing is possible; it is even the first step a jewellery brand can take to evolve socially and environmentally ethically. On the other hand, measuring the impact of each of these activities is essential to understand which are the most polluting. This makes it easier to adapt these activities to reduce the ecological footprint.

#### **Traceability: NFTs take on the jewellery world**

In the production chain of a jewel, traceability is an essential element. It guarantees the authenticity of a stone and the ethics of a jewel of a brand. The certificate is a non-negotiable factor in purchasing gems, generally in paper format; it is evolving today by navigating the technological advances of its time. The digital platform Noble Facet, created by entrepreneur Tatjana Li, is breaking new ground in NFTs. She believes that ethical production and supply chain transparency is essential and fundamental to ensure a sustainable and positive jewellery industry for the planet and those who live on it. Noble Facet proposes

#### *The RJC guide*

The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) has set up standards to be followed since its creation, published in their guide, "Guidance for responsible jewellery practices". This file contains recommendations that evolve according to the comments and opinions of members. It is a living tool that can be used by companies wishing to instil ethics and sustainability in their business. With this code, the RJC covers business ethics and professional conduct, human rights, social and environmental performance, and management systems. By assessing the risks inherent in each category, the RJC looks at the different contexts and suggests various applications that can be adapted to both large and small companies — from corruption to the threat of environmental contamination to forced labour — the code of practice offers everyone the opportunity to remedy or avoid the situation, wherever possible.

to control the traceability and provenance of pieces recorded on a digital register, a sort of digital double that almost infallibly follows the stone or jewel. NFTs now appear as a means of securing transactions and showing customers the efforts made in their quest for eco-responsibility. Beyond the frenzy raised by Tiffany & Co's *NFTiff-crypto punk*, crypto certificates provide a contract of trust between the buyer and the industry.

#### **Downstream: increasingly green jewellery?**

After the stones have been extracted and put into circulation on the market comes the question of creation. Design, modelling, cutting, casting, setting... Sustainability also means maintaining traditions that tend to disappear; committing to the maintenance and memory of a heritage", shared Laurent Cartier, co-founder and manager of Sustainable Pearls & Project Manager for SSEF, during the CREA webinar. The balance between preserving traditional practices, ethics, and eco-responsibility is not apparent; however, some brands have found a way to do this, notably through recycling. Because stones, like gold, are recyclable. This makes it possible to revive jewellery and feed a buoyant circular economy.

Ethical jewellery also pays attention to the entire chain, ensuring that the metals used — if they are not recycled — are Fairmined-labelled, just like the gems. Paulette à Bicyclette, April Paris, JEM, Flore & Zéphyr, OR DU MONDE... Numerous brands have emerged in recent years. They illustrate a continuing craze for more ethical products, even in the luxury sector. Vever, under the impetus of Camille Vever, its director, is committed to producing ethical jewellery with less environmental impact. In 2020, Camille Vever decided to found a company with a mission, a status provided for by the PACTE law for "companies that work for the common good [...] by placing the resolution of social and environmental issues at the heart of their model". Vever's workshops are based in France, and the materials used are from eco-responsible sources. But these brands are still entirely anecdotal on the market, as are their customers.

Therefore, it is more than necessary today to promote these initiatives, from the mine to the creation, to share and educate the industries and consumers. Education is the spearhead of ethical, eco-responsible and sustainable jewellery.

Gems, from an ecological point of view, only need water to be extracted. You don't need to add harmful chemicals into the soil to extract the stone. — *Kunming Tay*

# EFFOGLIARE





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## EUROPE FUNDS GREEN AND OPEN RESEARCH FOR ITS HERITAGE

European funding for research and innovation is going green. A complex architecture involving institutional and private actors, notably for the preservation of cultural heritage.

Horizon Europe 2021-2027 is the European Commission's flagship programme for funding research and innovation, supporting a wide range of projects to accompany the social, economic, technological and cultural transformations of the countries of the Union, for them to become "healthier" democracies where cultural values are protected.

### "Culture, creativity and inclusive society"

Within this programme, a cluster called Cluster 2 is dedicated to the theme of "Culture, creativity and inclusive society". Coordinated by the European Research Executive Agency, a call for projects was launched last June. With an overall budget of €158m, 51 projects were selected from the 378 applications received following the consultation, which ended on 7 October. The project leaders who just signed their grant agreements with the European Commission are divided into four main thematic families: "Feeding democracy in the face of emerging threats"; "Building a concrete trade policy through supply chains"; "Engaging with cultural actors" and "Protecting European cultural heritage for future generations".

### Financing culture and heritage projects

While the first strands focus on protecting the values of democracy and securing trade relations in a post-pandemic world, with war on Europe's doorstep, the last two focuses on culture and heritage. The projects selected for the call "Engaging with cultural actors" are rather monitoring and support missions, intended to make the European funding schemes known to the actors involved. Thus, the ARCHE project will focus on the development of a pan-

European framework for European cultural heritage research, while the Net4SocietyHE project will establish transnational networks to advise potential beneficiaries of community funding.

The call, on its part, encompassing the protection of European cultural heritage, was extremely diverse. This subject is at the heart of current European political concerns: it constitutes a crucial societal and economic resource, promoting resilience, inclusion, job creation, etc. It is nonetheless also endangered by the environmental, economic and social risks that Europe is experiencing. Aiming for long-term perspectives so that future generations can seize such heritage issues, the criteria of accessibility — both digital and physical — and of openness prevailed in the selection process. Projects such as IN SITU offers to put these guidelines into practice by studying how to encourage cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas, which have long been forgotten in the field of cultural heritage. Others, such as MuseIT,

PREMIERE and SHIFT focus on the role of technology, virtual reality and artificial intelligence in museums and in the performing arts.

**Three innovative projects for green conservation**

Heritage implies conservation, preservation and transmission, whether of works, knowledge or sites. Three innovative projects have been selected to support a green transition towards new conservation practices: GoGreen, MOXY and GREENART. Their goal? To develop new materials for the restoration of works of art in an environmentally responsible manner. The three projects aim to test active principles in the development or industrialisation phase, in order to adapt them to more sustainable conservation-restoration goals.

With a budget of €3.272m allocated by Europe, GoGreen is coordinated by the University of Amsterdam and brings together eight participants — professionals, research laboratories such as the CNRS and other universities, the University of Bologna for instance. At the heart of this open research, the methods are inspired by nature and bio-based with green solvents, reagents from nature and ecological delivery systems. The entire chain is engaged, from cleaning to stabilising works

of art, including transport and an application to help restorers design ecological preventive and corrective conservation treatments.

On its side, the MOXY programme is based on a sophisticated technology, but simple idea: atomic oxygen to clean the delicate surfaces of works of art, without contact, without risk to health or the environment, without residue or waste. Certainly more environmentally friendly than conventional solvents. The €4m project, coordinated by Ghent University, brings together plasma specialists, environmental scientists and curators from the Netherlands, Lithuania, France, Sweden, Denmark and Italy.

Finally, GREENART — which we will be reporting on in future issues [see box] — is an ambitious international programme that brings together 27 partners — and not just European ones — for a period of 36 months and a budget of €3.8m given by Europe. Its goal? To develop innovative solutions for corrective and preventive conservation while meeting the requirements of the Green Deal, i.e. using low-impact, environmentally friendly materials obtained from renewable natural sources or recycled waste.

**GREENART, towards Europe and beyond**

Coordinated by the Consorzio Interuniversitario per lo Sviluppo dei Sistemi a Grande Interfase (CSGI), an inter-university consortium based in Florence, GREENART brings together an impressive number of leading European research institutes and universities, as well as professionals in the sector and major international museums such as the Solomon Guggenheim Foundation – Peggy Guggenheim Collection, LACMA, the Tate Gallery and the prestigious Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET). Although the American and British partners are not direct beneficiaries of European funds, they are actively involved in the research initiated by GREENART.

The first aspect of their research involves curative conservation. This entails replacing existing polymers, solvents and surfactants with biological, natural or low-impact materials that are fully sustainable. The second part of the research focuses on systems to replace traditional consolidants, coatings and packaging materials with plant proteins and polysaccharides from renewable resources. For example, protective coatings from cellulose waste or even shellfish, or biodegradable packaging foam, all of which are, of course, non-invasive and reversible.

Launched on 5-6 October in Athens at the Egaleo Park Campus Conference Centre Egaleo Park campus, the first meeting of all 27 GREENART partners was hosted by the CSGI, Piero Baglioni, project coordinator, Antonio Mirabile, dissemination manager and Athina Alexopoulou from the University of West Attica (UNIWA). A moment of exchange and sharing, already bearing fruit thanks to the working groups that have been formed. The first meeting of a long series: the partners will have three years to complete their projects.

*All about GREENART with AMA*

In future issues of AMA, go behind the scenes of the GREENART project and discover how academics, curators, engineers and restorers are combining their knowledge and expertise to move heritage research towards a greener future. Exclusive interviews, surveys and reports will give you an insider's view of the developments of this innovative European project, which combines heritage science, open research and citizen initiatives. AMA will follow GREENART during the three-year programme and will seize the opportunity to go green with subjects devoted to art and ecology, to the green transition of museums, the eco-design of fairs, and other initiatives of curators and restorers, currently reinventing their profession through ongoing ecological innovation.

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Il' sistema  
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The reversal of a paradigm (2020), Fabrizio Cotognini

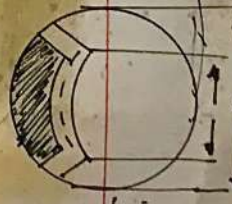
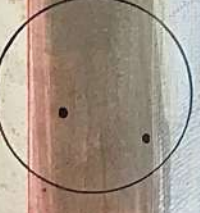
Courtesy Fabrizio Cotognini, Antonio Mirabile

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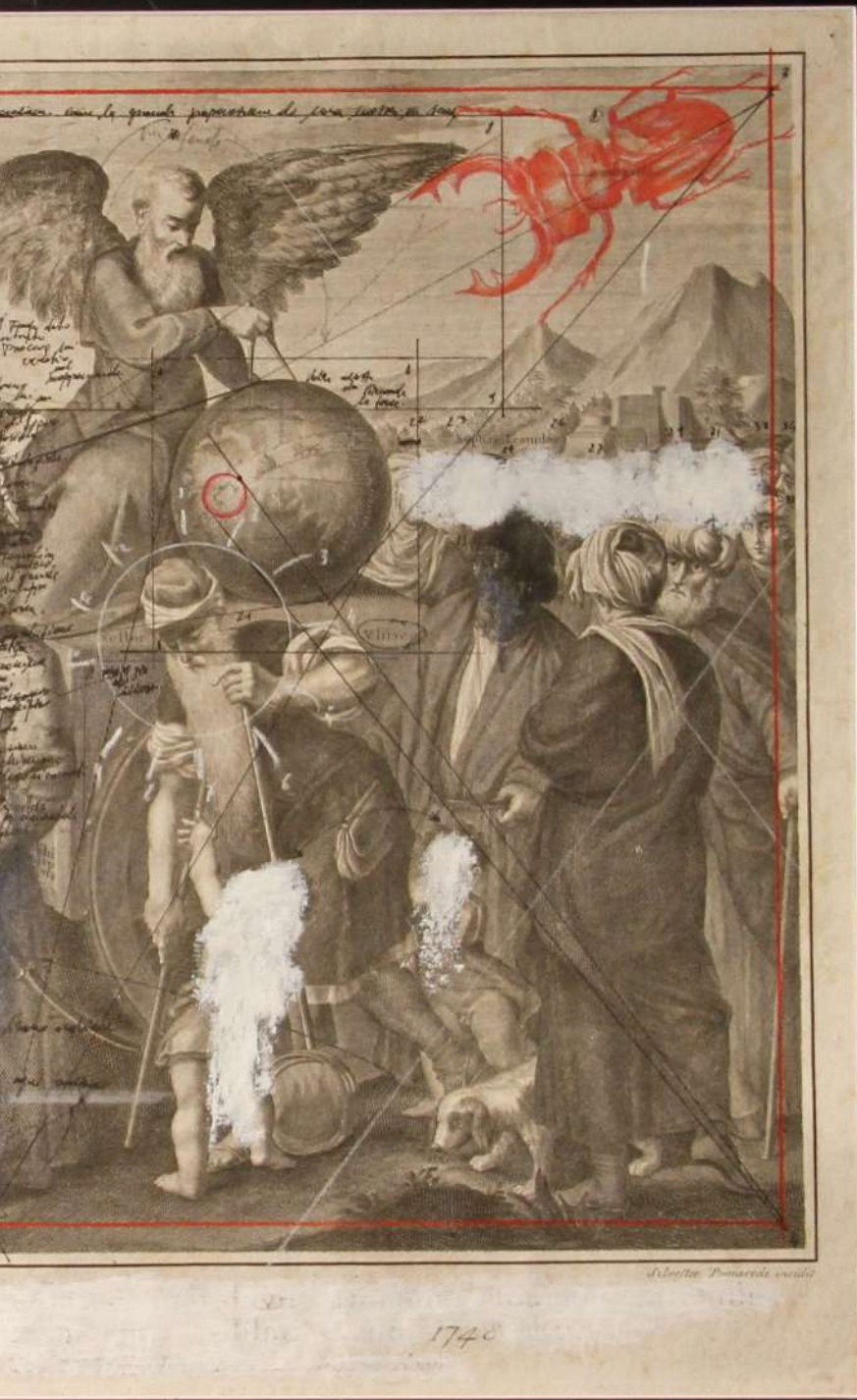
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Fabrizio Cotognini







Contamination of historical archetype (2017), Fabrizio Cotognini

Courtesy Fabrizio Cotognini. Antonio Mirabile



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