

# Vintage and Historical Jewelry at Paris Biennale

September 2016 marked the last Biennale des Antiquaires as it becomes an annual event from next year. The high-end jewelry on display was bold and spectacular.



By Marie Chabrol

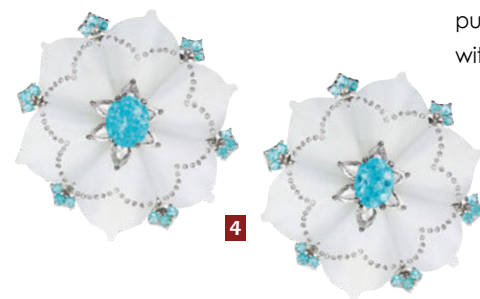
3

1. The Bowtie Brooch. 2016 Black Label Masterpiece No.XV. Rubies and a 76.91-carat old mine cut diamond. (Courtesy of Cindy Chao)

2. The Phoenix Feather brooch. 2016 Black Label Masterpiece No.XV. 923 fancy colored diamond, pear-shaped greenish yellow chameleon diamonds of 2.47 carats, pear-shaped fancy vivid orangey yellow diamond of 2.03 carats. Set in titanium. (Courtesy of Cindy Chao)

3. Natural saltwater pearls and diamonds earrings, set in 18k gold. Two natural pearls : light cream of 14.96 carats and white diamond of 13.18 carats. (Courtesy of Boghossian Jewels)

4. Oval-shaped Paraiba tourmalines and white jade earrings set in 18k gold. 1.67 carat and 1.64 carat Brazilian Paraiba stones. (Courtesy of Boghossian Jewels)



4



1

2

If many of us waited with great impatience for the start of September and the Biennale des Antiquaires, everybody in the high-end jewelry industry knew that it was going to be a different show this year, almost exclusively focused on antique items. Antique dealers didn't want to have impressive high-end jewelry displayed of the type seen at the last event in September 2014. Everybody was agreed about the fact that modern jewelry was becoming too prominent at the Biennale. However, the presence of several Parisian and international key houses was a major attraction for the public which faced a higher admission price of €35 compared with €30 in 2014.

If this edition was less glamorous, the choices seemed profitable with 117 antique dealers and only four top-line jewelry houses. Selected by a committee chaired by Henri Loyrette, former President of the Louvre, and Dominique Chevalier, Chairman of the *Syndicat des*

*Antiquaires (SNA)*, there were 36% more exhibitors with a return by highly specialized dealers with exceptional *objets d'art*. It was also the last version of the show as a Biennale, since it will become an annual event as of next September.

Nevertheless, high jewelry was here. Four houses: Cindy Chao, Boghossian Jewels, De Grisogono and Nirav Modi unveiled their latest creations to the public. We were definitely enthused to discover the jewels designed by these companies, and especially the ones displayed by Chao and Boghossian with amazing and rare gemstones linked to technical innovations created by French and Swiss master jewelers. It was also interesting to see jewelry designed by Modi and made in the firm's Mumbai workshops: a gold necklace set with natural pink topaz stones weighing 71.87 carats and 12 carats, and the Maharani ring set with a 26.49-carat Colombian emerald.

For us gem lovers, it was impossible to miss some real rarities. The 813-carat rough diamond, 'The Constellation' bought by De Grisogono, was displayed for a few hours. This \$63 million stone came from the Karowe mine in Botswana belonging to Lucara Diamond Corp. The company predicted that the stone could become the biggest flawless diamond, with cutting to take place in New York and the polished gem revealed next year.

Meanwhile, Chao decided to pay a beautiful tribute to nature with an impressive 76.91-carat old mine cut diamond and with two unusual pear-shape diamonds : a 2.47-carat chameleon and a 2.03-carat fancy vivid orangey yellow. Colored



5

7

6

8

5. 3.02 carat fancy vivid orangey yellow pear-shaped diamond and diamond 'kissing' ring, set in 18k gold. (Courtesy of Boghossian Jewels)

6. 2.57 carat Brazil no oil emerald and diamond 'kissing' ring. (Courtesy of Boghossian Jewels)

7. 6.09 carat Ceylon no heat cushion-shaped padparadscha and diamond ring, set in 18k gold. (Courtesy of Boghossian Jewels)

8. Diamond inlay into mother-of-pearl set. (Courtesy of Boghossian Jewels)

9. Measuring over six centimetres wide, 'The Constellation' weighs 813-carats and was discovered by Canadian company, Lucara Diamond, at its Karowe mine in Botswana in November 2015. The gem was purchased for \$63 million earlier this year. (Courtesy of De Grisogono)



9





**10.** A magnificent Art Nouveau gold, enamel, opal, ruby and diamond 'Nike' pendant by Philippe Wolfers, centering upon a face of a woman carved in opal. Brussels, circa 1902. (Courtesy of Epoque Fine Jewels)

**11.** A rare and important Art Nouveau 'chaîne de corsage' by Georges Fouquet and Alphonse Mucha, composed of 11 sections, each unique and set with various gemstones including ruby, sapphire and emerald, baroque natural pearls and diamonds, highlighted between each with a geometric motif decorated with plique-à-jour enamel, terminating on two pendants of foliate design highlighted with plique-à-jour and translucent enamel and baroque natural pearls, mounted in 18k gold. With maker's marks of Georges Fouquet and numbered. Paris, circa 1900. (Courtesy of Epoque Fine Jewels)

**12.** An exquisite Symbolist gold, enamel and pearl pendant by Lalique finely cast with the profile of two maidens, their undulating tresses forming a whirlpool surround. Six swallows are diving and swooping over and under the maidens. (Courtesy of Epoque Fine Jewels)

**13.** Turquoise inlay gold ornaments from the 7th to the 9th century. Tubo Kingdom. (Courtesy of Gisele Croes)



**11**

stones were also enhanced during the show with important weights, desirable origins and well-documented reports from international laboratories such as SSEF, Gübelin and AGL.

For many years, statement gemstones such as padparadscha, Burmese or Kashmiri sapphires, Burmese rubies, Colombian or Zambian emeralds and tourmalines were often sold with three or four different certificates. Boghossian decided to really blow us away with its new Les Merveilles collection. Facetted diamond beads, a 6.09-carat padparadscha Ceylon sapphire, a mesmerizing 'kissing ring' set with a three-carat fancy vivid orangy yellow diamond, a 62-carat Mozambican paraiba-like tourmaline, the only Kashmiri sapphire of the show, weighing 6.13 carats, and one of the most important imperial jade necklaces known-to-date composed of seven beads measuring between 27-32 mm from the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Antique jewels and old mine cut gemstones were perfectly displayed and there was a very rare Tubo Kingdom set of 13



**12**

**14.** Diamond necklace set in 18k gold. Set with more than 2,500 white diamonds and more than 5,000 black diamonds. The 22 round diamonds weight more than 48 carats. (Courtesy of De Grisogono)

**15.** 18k white gold ring set with a 16.05-carat diamond and emeralds. (Courtesy of De Grisogono)



**14**

**15**







**16.** A rare Rene Boivin's gold and diamonds necklace which belonged to Princess Irene of Greece, circa 1945. (Courtesy of Véronique Bamps)

**17.** A gold necklace set with soapstone handcarved scarabs by Blanchard. (Courtesy of Veronique Bamps)

**18.** A Fabergé pendant set with diamonds, demandtoid garnets, garnets and fine pearls. Circa 1900. (Courtesy of Veronique Bamps)

**19.** A rare flower enameled gold brooch by Audouard Freres set with diamonds and garnets. Belonged to Elsa Schiaparelli, circa 1850. (Courtesy of Véronique Bamps)

**20.** The 'Zsa Zsa' ring, 18k white gold, diamonds, tourmalines and a +3-carat blue tourmaline from Afghanistan. (Courtesy of John Rubel)

**21.** The Orchid 18k gold ring set with a 71.96-carat fancy intense yellow diamond. (Courtesy of Anna Hu)

**22.** The 'Louise' ring, 18k white gold, diamonds, rubies and a 3.02 natural Mozambican ruby. (Courtesy of John Rubel)

**23.** An important sapphire (≈ 20cts), emerald and diamond 'Bird of paradise' brooch by Cartier, mounted in platinum and gold. Signed 'Cartier Paris' and numbered. Paris, circa 1950. (Courtesy of Epoque Fine Jewels)

turquoise inlaid gold ornaments from the 7th to the 9th century displayed by Gisele Croes. One of the most impressive gems was a 23.14-carat padparadsha from Ceylon certified as natural by SSEF and exhibited by HD Rare & Unique. Three booths offered connoisseurs and collectors a wonderful range of signed jewelry. At Véronique Bamps, we saw a rare René Boivin necklace which belonged to Princess Irene of Greece and an impressive Audouard Freres brooch from the Elsa Schiaparelli collection.

But we could speak about amazing soapstone scarabs set on Blanchard's necklaces, and about unusual Fabergé jewels perfectly preserved. It was a pleasure to admire the collection of Art Nouveau jewelry gathered by Nicole Verschuere. This house from Courtai in Belgium is highly focused on 1900s masterpieces by René Lalique, Philippe Wolfers or Georges Fouquet. We have to mention a rarely-seen chaîne de corsage designed by Fouquet and Mucha, which was certainly one of the most impressive antique jewels of this show.

Finally, it was very interesting to see the work of the Parisian house Martin Du Daffoy and to discover its impressive selection of historical jewels and old mine cut gems : These included Empresse Eugenie's necklace set with rubies and diamonds, a 55-carat single diamond ring by JAR, luminous 75-carat, 30-carat or 23-carat Colombian emeralds, a 22-carat Type Ila diamond and a very touching bracelet with the names Albert and Carola embracing each other. Made in 1863, this bracelet grabbed our attention because it came from the same family that owned the 40.70-carat Dresden Green.

If Parisian and international key houses were not exhibitors this year, they nonetheless launched collections. The house which has made a very big splash is Van Cleef & Arpels. After launching a beautiful high-end emerald jewelry collection in July, the company publicly exhibited its new collection inspired by the story of Noah's Ark which was unprecedented for this famous brand and a great success. For the first time, families, children, jewelry lovers or connoisseurs had the opportunity to see some amazing jewels traditionally displayed only to buyers or the industry press. For this rare event, the brand chose the secret Hotel d'Evreux and the famous theater director Robert Wilson to stage this exhibition. Visitors were welcomed with both thunder and storms and finally invited to imagine the great Biblical Flood and to admire mesmerizing gold or platinum brooches set with diamonds, lapis lazuli, chrysoprase, precious wood, sugillite, coral, opal and other precious stones. An amazing journey!

Many other houses unveiled novelties. Chanel launched its new J12 XS Watch. It stands out because Chanel has used





30. 'Hiboux' brooch, white gold, diamonds, onyx, chrysoprase, sugillite. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)

31. 'Pegase' brooch, white, pink and red gold, diamonds, violet sapphires, rubies and coral. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)

32. 'Cocinelles' brooch, white and pink gold, diamonds, pink and violet sapphires, black spinels. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)

33. The 'Sultan Suleiman' ring, 18k gold, diamonds, tsavorites, garnets, sapphires. (Courtesy of Lydia Courteille)

34. 'Ratons Laveurs' brooch, white and pink gold, diamonds, onyx, 36.26 carat garnet and a 12.70 carat pink tourmaline. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)



different unusual know-how in the making of this beautiful timepiece: Embroidery from Lesage or handmade leather gloves from Causse, an old leather manufacturer from Millau, and both bought by Chanel to preserve their heritage.

Coinciding with the Biennale, Anna Hu, in partnership with Christie's Private Sales, offered an important Magnificent Jewels exhibition at The Ritz. This included one of the latest Hu creations: a gold ring set with an impressive 71.76-carat fancy intense yellow diamond. Hu still holds the record for the highest price paid for a work created by a contemporary jewelry artist. Her Cote d'Azur brooch broke the record for the highest price paid per carat for a Burmese sapphire at \$78,400. Last, Sophie Mizrahi again enriched the John Rubel Collection with many important rings, and especially two set with paraiba-like tourmaline from Afghanistan and Mozambican rubies.

We finished the month of September with the Paris fashion week. If July is the month for high-end jewelry, some houses decided to wait until the fall to show new collections. It was delightful to admire and handle the new jewels made by Lydia Courteille, known for her amazing, colorful and impressive creations. Her new opus was inspired by the Topkapi Palace and Iznik pottery from the 15th century colored with cobalt or turquoise blues, olive green and luminous red. She chose big Ethiopian opals, sapphires, rubies and tsavorite garnets to reinterpret these traditional patterns.





35. 'Toucans' brooch, white and yellow gold, diamonds, blue and yellow sapphires, yellow and paraiba-like tourmalines, garnets, black and red spinels, ebony. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)

36. 'Licorne' brooch, white and red gold, diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, turquoise. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)

37. 'Pingouins' brooch, white and pink gold, diamonds, coral and onyx. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)

38. 'Phoenix' brooch, white, red and pink gold, diamonds, black spinels, mother-of-pearl. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)

39. 'Zebres' brooch, white gold, yellow and white diamonds, onyx and lapis lazuli. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)

40. 'Biche et cerf' brooch, yellow and white gold, diamonds, yellow sapphires, garnets, onyx, ebony. (Courtesy of Van Cleef and Arpels)



Lastly, the Italian house Damiani chose Paris to unveil the most important piece of this fashion week : the 'Sveva' tiara masterpiece. This diadem was named in honor of Princess Nicoletta Romanov's grandmother, Countess Sveva della Gherardesca. For her marriage to Nicolas Romanov (great-nephew of the last Tsar of Russia), Sveva wore a tiara made from tiny wax orange flowers. Princess Nicoletta carefully kept this jewel. Six months of production were required to transform this sophisticated ornament into a masterpiece of fine jewelry set with more than 4,500 diamonds and 83 white Japanese pearls, perfectly displaying the know-how of Damiani's master jewelers.

Many international designers and brands choose Paris to launch new designs during the Biennale or related events. If September is quieter than July, it's always a pleasure to admire all these jewels and gemstones. Next step? The 2017 Fashion Week and we are already impatiently waiting for it! ♦