

# L'École des Arts Joailliers

## The Van Cleef & Arpels School of Jewelry Arts

In the heart of Paris, on the Rue Danielle Casanova—near the luxurious Place Vendôme—the venerable jewelry house, Van Cleef & Arpels, has been sponsoring a school dedicated to the art of jewelry since 2012. Affordable prices, informative contributors and jewelry-related cultural events are among the keys to the success of this innovative project.



To learn more about Van Cleef's School of Jewelry Arts, Marie Chabrol, talks to its president, Marie Vallanet-Delhom.

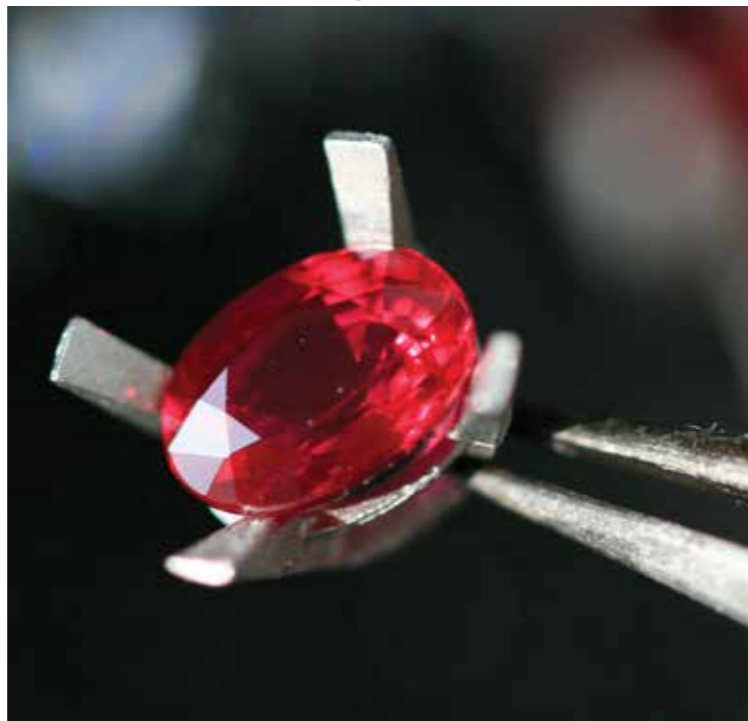
"This school was created to offer the opportunity and pleasure to learn." Spoken by Marie Vallanet-Delhorn, these words sum up the goal of the institute dedicated entirely to the transmission of knowledge and the popularization of the savoir-faire of such jewelry-related topics as gemology, history, drawing, wax carving, stone setting, as well as Japanese lacquer techniques, among others.

For the first time, and in a non-industrial setting, one of the world's most prominent French jewelry houses offers the general public the means to discover, understand and practice the techniques traditionally used to create unique high jewelry pieces. "The School of Jewelry Arts aims to spread and pass down the jewelry culture to the broadest public possible. We have created a cultural place where various types of jewelry know-how are explained to the general public."

Based in a completely restored and beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion representative of French decorative art, the school is equipped with state-of-the-art tools. In a drawing studio, students learn how to paint with gouache, while others can

Marie Vallanet-Delhom, President of the School of Jewelry Arts.

A demonstration of how gemstone are set.



A student learns some of the techniques of jewelry making.



Gemology is one of the courses taught at the School of Jewelry Arts in Paris. Here, a student learns about emeralds



practice making jewelry in a spacious and luminous workshop. There are also rooms dedicated to gemology (with the opportunity to handle colored gemstones and diamonds), art history, enameling and watchmaking. And, of course, an important library for students, craftspeople and teachers offers an extensive collection of jewelry related books.

What about prices: They are quite affordable, according to Vallanet-Delhorn, and range from €100 to €200 for 2 or 4 hours, "so that the greatest number of people can follow a class." In fact, over the last five years, more than 16,000 people from around the world have attended at least one lecture or a course at the school.

Everything in this peaceful setting exudes the luxury and spirit of Van Cleef & Arpels. "This is the first jewelry school for the public. Although it is sponsored by Van Cleef & Arpels, the house doesn't inject itself into the topics relating to jewelry education. This is a place for aficionados, lovers of the beauty of jewelry art, and those who want to become connoisseurs. It is not a professional school. We are open to everyone," adds Vallanet-Delhom.

And, even children can participate. The school has developed Creative Workshops (€15 per session) for children aged 5 to 16 years.

For adults who are not free during the day, the Evening Conversations (€40 each) welcome



The very modern gemology room at the School of Jewelry Arts.

up to 60 people who come to learn about a particular topic with two experts over a glass of wine. Held the last Thursday of the month in Paris, from 20:00 to 22:00, some of the recent topics were *The History of Mellerio* by the journalist Capucine Junker and Emilie Berard, Mellerio's Heritage director, and *The Jewels of Eugenie* by art historians Beatrice Vingtrinier and Gislain Aucremanne (also a professor at the school). Upcoming topics include *Flora in Jewelry Arts* and *Architecture and Jewelry*.

The school has also held educational events outside of France. Its team travels regularly in some of the most important cities for jewelry such as Tokyo, New York, Hong Kong and Dubai. "The classes and workshops sponsored by the school abroad are the same as the ones in Paris. The public is the same wherever they are in the world. People are all motivated by an insatiable and amazing curiosity about jewelry history, gemology and high jewelry savoir-faire. It's truly exciting to share these moments with them," smiles the school's president.

Recently, in New York, the school sponsored a talk on *The Representation of Jewels in European Painting*. In Hong Kong, it has scheduled an event on June 14-15,

featuring *Treasures & Legends of Van Clef & Arpels*, while *Mogok Rubies* will be discussed July 18-19. For anyone interested in the *Why and How of Collecting Jewelry*, they can catch that topic August 30-31 in Hong Kong.

The school is also a way for Van Cleef & Arpels to promote cultural projects through exhibitions and educational programs for not only students, but also for museums. "The school is the perfect melting pot for all actions related to the transmission of jewelry culture." In this way, the team lends its support to the Decorative Arts Museum in Paris, and more specifically to the Galerie des Bijoux, an impressive collection of more than 1200 pieces from the Middle Ages to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Since 2016, the school has supported the publication of a trilogy of books. The first one, *Flora*, was released in October 2016. The two others will be published both in French and English (Thames & Hudson) over the course of 2017. In collaboration with the Natural History Museum of Paris, the team is developing an important project to create replicas—in shape and size—of the 17 most famous diamonds in France that were sold to Louis XIV by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier. This historical project is based on



The school's library contains a wide variety of jewelry-related publications.

the accounts of Colbert, General Controller of Finance. The school is also sponsoring the thesis of Cécile Lugand on this same subject. Lugand is a student in the Historical Research and Art Review Department at the University of Rennes. Finally, the school is providing a teaching patronage to jewelry students from Paris' famous École Boule and from Kyoto's University of Art and Design.

In January 2017, the school launched a large exhibition room. Twice a year, an event showcases the creations of contemporary jewelry designers. The first event organized during Paris Fashion Week in January allowed the public to discover the amazing pieces designed by Balthus' daughter, Harumi Klossowska de Rola. Many more impressive exhibitions are in the pipeline.

"We are committed to not only educating people about jewelry, but also supporting those in the industry with innovative ideas," adds Marie Vallanet-Delhom. Clearly, the Van Cleef & Arpels School of Jewelry Arts is and will continue to be an important partner in our industry. ([www.lecolevancliefarpels.com](http://www.lecolevancliefarpels.com))

All photos are courtesy of Van Cleef & Arpels.

