

Exhibition Review: *Illuminations, from Earth to Jewel*

Marie Chabrol

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Figure 1. *Jessie* brooch. Yellow gold, pink and yellow sapphire, diamond, and peridot. Photo courtesy of Paula Crevoshay.

For more than 33 years, American jewelry artist Paula Crevoshay has been known her ability to mix unusual and rare gemstones into impressive and colorful jewels as brooches, earrings and cocktail rings. She is known in the jewelry industry as the “Queen of Color” because of her work. This fall, the Museum of Mineralogy at the ParisTech School of Mines exhibited *Illuminations, from Earth to Jewel*, where select pieces of Crevoshay’s impressive contemporary jewelry was displayed alongside the museum’s specimen collection. The exhibition offers a dazzling tribute to nature, Crevoshay’s favorite source of inspiration. It highlights gems rarely used by French jewelers, such as apatite, chrysocolla, spinel, and atypical garnets.

A former painter, Crevoshay approaches each piece like a painting, combining techniques and choosing gems to create shades than our eyes will perceive as striking in her bugs, leaves, and landscapes. Five display cases invite the visitor to admire a selection of thirty-two jewels, culled from private collections. These include orchid-inspired pieces, marine animals, and abstract creations. It’s difficult for this reviewer to select favorite pieces from the show. Two impressive flower brooches, *Jessie* and *Maia’s Gift* are notable for their colorful contrasts. The mix of pink and yellow sapphires with peridots in the former (figure 1) and tsavorite garnets, pink and yellow sapphires, and diamonds in the latter (figure 2) make these two pieces stand out. These mix of bright, pure color mixtures are far from traditional, but they ultimately work. The result is bold and joyful. And Crevoshay shows her audience how important and innovative it is to make unexpected choices outside of diamonds and the classic “Big Three” of sapphire, ruby, and emerald, as in her *Tsaritsa* earrings (figure 3). These feature azurite-malachite cabochons as center stones accentuated by tsavorites.



Figure 2. *Maia's Gift* brooch. Yellow gold, tsavorite garnet, pink and yellow sapphire, and diamond. Photo courtesy of Paula Crevoshay.



Figure 3. *Tsaritsa* earrings. Yellow gold, opal, tsavorite garnet, and azurite/malachite. Photo courtesy of Paula Crevoshay.

By providing two rough specimens from the collection per piece, the conservation team of the Museum allows the public to gain a better comprehension of the relationship between mining, cutting, and setting. It's the perfect place to see how crystallized minerals or gemstones and imagine how gem cutters will give sparkle to the final stones.

Crevoshay's next vision is to translate into jewelry the origins of the gems used, in order to create beautiful masterpieces that will reflect the gems found in these locations. It's possible that the bracelet *Rainbow over Montana* (figure 4) is from this new chapter. This piece enhances all the range of colors found in Montana sapphires, from a strong blue to a greenish grey, along with different shades of pink. From perfectly transparent stones to material with visible milky inclusions, these unusual stones indicate that a wonderful journey yet awaits us.



Figure 4. *Rainbow over Montana* bracelet. Yellow gold and sapphires from Montana. Photo courtesy of Paula Crevoshay.

Illuminations, from Earth to Jewel runs at the Museum of Mineralogy at the ParisTech School of Mines until Wednesday, February 1, 2017. General admission is 6€. Students and seniors are 3€, and children under 12 are free. The museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 1:30 to 6:00 pm and Saturday from 10:00 am to 12:30pm and 2 to 5pm; it is closed on Sunday and Monday.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Marie Chabrol is an independent journalist, specializing in the gem and jewelry trade, in Paris.