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CRAFT METALWORK

THE GROWTH OF
COSTUME JEWELRY
IN 1920S

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Introduction

As real and precious jewelry has always signified sentiment, wealth and power, costume jewelry has to be unrivalled for its portrayal of fashion, beauty and changing social attitudes through the ages. Costume jewelry is essentially ephemeral and is not intended to last beyond the latest trends and fashions. As costume jewelry are jewels of little value, they can be more evocative and descriptive of the wearer and the time they lived in than expensive jewelry. Therefore costume jewelry lends itself to the whims and frivolities of fashion, while capturing the moods of each era. Costume jewelry is a personal adornment which encompasses a wide range of wearable objects from pieces of body sculpture to fun novelty badges. Although some works are limited edition pieces, most are adapted for the mass market using a wide range of non precious and semi precious materials, such as plastics, paste, gold plated metal, wood and even paper.

The definition of costume jewelry has changed throughout the ages. While the paste jewelry of the 18th century set in gold and silver may be included under the definition of costume jewelry, modern jewelry, with its advantages of cheaper alternative materials must be essentially nonprecious to qualify. The 19th century becomes more obscure as numerous natural materials, such as mother of pearl and coral seem to fall into the categories of less expensive real jewels. The term costume jewelry became more defined by the 20th century. The title arose during the era when couturiers linked costume

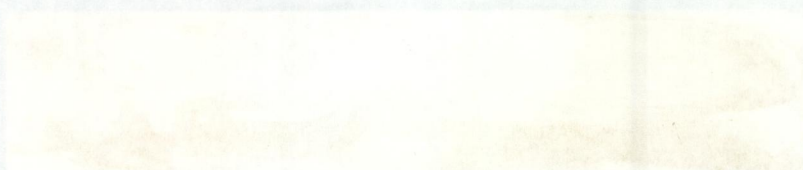
jewelry with fashion to enhance their collections viewing it as an indispensable addition to each outfit. The development of costume jewelry became inextricably linked with the fashion world, where its very purpose became purely decorative, enhancing the clothes that it accompanied rather than proclaiming the wearers wealth or status.

The era of couture jewels in turn led into the years of huge commercial production and the growth of mass manufacturing where costume jewelry no longer became directly linked to the fashion houses of Paris , but part of an international popular culture.

As costume jewelry has always marked the changing styles and attitudes through the decades, the ostentatious costume jewelry of the 1920s accurately portrayed a frantic post war society that tried to banish the horrors of the first world war by leading frenzied glamorous lifestyles. New fads such as Jazz and sensual freemoving dances such as the Tango and the Charleston took hold of a generation of 'bright young things'. Jazz music, epitomised the spirit and energy of this generation, who rejected old victorian morals of class and behavior. In the literary world satirists like Coward and Evelyn Waugh captured the sophistication and rebellious attitudes of the postwar generation, who refused to live up to their elders expectations of gallantry and virtue. It was the dawning of a truly modern era, a time of rapidly changing technology and design that effected not only the costume jewelry industry, but the automobile industry and engineering. Improvements in mass manufacturing such as casting and stamping and the freedom and excitement of new plastics helped to create low priced jewels of seemingly impossible wealth and glamour. Advancements in printing and advertising provided new periodicals and fashion magazines thus ensuring that new styles in costume jewelry did not go unnoticed. Through



(plate 1) By the late twenties women's fashions became simpler and more comfortable to wear.



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the 1920s costume jewelry gained a new importance becoming a vital ingredient in the glamourising of fashion illustrations, advertisements and publicity materials. Advertisements at this time were mainly responsible for popularising the image of a desirable way of life based on the lifestyles of the elite, thus women less fortunate could experience a taste of this glamour through the growing availability of luxury items such as costume jewelry at prices they could afford. These factors along with higher standards of living created the perfect environment for mass consumerism which until now was solely an American phenomenon.) According to **J.B. Priestly**, *"You need money in this England, but you do not need much money. It is a large scale, mass-production job, with cut prices. You could almost accept Woolworths as it's symbol. It's cheapness is both it's strength and it's weakness. It is it's strength because ^{being cheap} it is accessible, it nearly achieves the famous equality of opportunity".* (Wilson E, Taylor C, 1989 , P 76)

The fast pacing consumerism of America affected European countries such as Britain and France, where society belonged to an old ordered class system. Despite being highly critical of the materialism of American culture, it's influences could be seen in every aspect of British life, from cinema, jazz and dance halls to mass manufactured costume jewelry. The popular use of costume jewelry has always been an Anglo-American phenomenon. While American and English women have worn costume jewelry for generations, it is only in the last decade that the average european woman has accepted costume jewelry as an legitimate fashion accessory. The successful distribution of costume jewelry in the 1920s in America and England is largely due to their 'big store mentality'. Large department stores in England and the USA such as

1923



1927



1928



(plate 2) The new 'Peek-a-boo' Cloche hat complimented the new shorter hairstyles.



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Woolworths were important retail outlets for costume jewelry to women of all classes. Woolworth's bulk purchasing policy enabled them to retail a wide range of low cost costume jewelry with extremely successful results. The south of England, owing to the jobs created by new light industries was the 'new Britain'. " *the new post-war England, belonging far more to the age itself than to this particular island. America, I suppose, was it's real birth-place. This is the England of filling-stations and factories that look like exhibition buildings, of giant cinemas, dance-halls and cafés, bungalows with tiny garages, cocktail-bars, Woolworths, factory girls looking like actresses*". (Wilson E, Taylor C, 1989, P⁷⁵189)

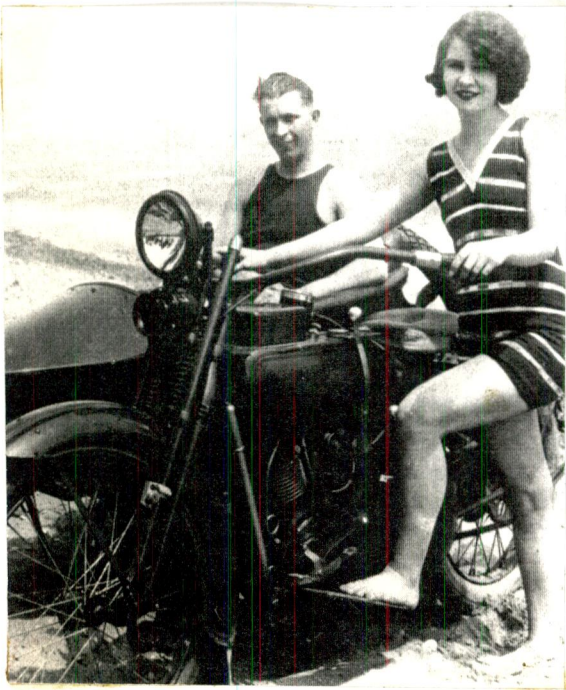
Women have always been the greatest patrons of costume jewelry and this is certainly true of women in the 1920s . The lives of many women did improve between the wars, and the vote was an important symbolic victory. Women were now being readily admitted into the professions and civil-service, whilst the growth of factory work provided alternatives for working-class women, who had been driven out of their jobs by the return of men from the war. This gave them the independence of a salary, despite this women still had to fight for equal pay, and French women had not yet obtained the vote. The '20's saw a new kind of woman, who unlike her Victorian counterpart, was independent, self-sufficient and adventurous. Due to the high casualty toll of the war that devastated a whole generation of men, women were able to dispense with chaperones and settle for emancipation through sexual freedom, drinking, smoking and wearing cosmetics. This new breed of working woman could now afford to buy the latest styles in clothing and and of course costume jewelry which they wore in great profusion.

Fashions of the 1920s emphasised the aspect of popular culture that



(plate 3) Women could be seen at fashionable bars and nightclubs drinking, smoking and dancing to new free moving dances like the Charleston and Tango.

United States and the world. The world is a big place and there are many different people and cultures. We should all get along and respect each other. The world is our home and we should all take care of it.



(plate 4) Women of the '20s led more active lifestyles. They also became involved in competitive sports, and *Amelia Earhart* was the first woman to cross the Atlantic in 1928

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it. It is a bird of the same species as
the bird in the photograph in Paris was an

modernised the human body, thus the slender and sleek look replaced the fussy and restrictive curves of the Victorian era. This gave women a degree of physical emancipation that they lacked in their everyday lives. New dances and women's increasing involvement in sport demanded a new freedom of movement which was not possible in old-fashioned corsets, typified by fashion models in energetic and sporty poses. The fashionable woman of the twenties was thus associated with travel, healthy outdoor pursuits and a pacey lifestyle, while women dispensed with parasols and lotions, becoming golden brown playing golf or tennis. Sport motifs occurred regularly in costume jewelry, the lady tennis player, the lady golfer. Movement was the key to the new fashions, thus emancipating women's bodies with the simplest of shifts that left arms, legs and necks shockingly bare. The androgynous look of the 'garconne' was all the rage, thus women bobbed their hair and longed to be flat-chested, long-legged and tubular in shape and sometimes dressed like men. The new look of hair and clothing demanded a new role for jewellery and a need for a lot more of it. The new hairstyles ousted ornate haircombs in favour of the bandeaux while the cloche hat inspired fun and glamorous hat pins were made of plastic or exotically coloured glass stones.

Sleeveless evening dresses cried out for multiple bangles and bracelets of jade or plastic while dramatically plunging backless gowns were strung with rows of pearls, crystals or glass beads to accentuate the new long lean lines and to swing with the new lithe female body. There was a fast growing market for all fashion accessories, handbags, smoking, and makeup accessories. Buttons and belt buckles were artistic and fun, and as more and more costume jewelry was worn, outrageous and unashamedly fake jewels became yet more fashionable and became the essential modern accessory.



(plate 5) The nightclub 'Le Monocle,' in Paris was an intimate place where women could dress as men.

The following chapters will attempt to illustrate the development of costume jewelry in the 1920s , from the styles that evolved to the technical advancements which led to its widespread popularity. The first chapter will chart the metamorphosis of costume jewelry from its inaccurate label of imitation to a place of importance within the fashion world. I will also discuss the various factors which led to costume jewelry's exalted popularity in the 1920s. The influences of Art Nouveau, and how the movement provided an alternative to the ostentatious diamond with creations of artistic yet inexpensive jewels which in turn spurred on the mass market is one aspect of this discussion. Secondly, Chanel's contribution to costume jewelry and her sanctioning of wearing fake jewels, which in turn inspired other couturiers to include costume jewelry in their collections. Thirdly, I will analyse how this sanctioning affected the mass manufacturing industry, which produced an ever increasing availability of low cost high fashion costume jewelry. The second chapter describes costume jewelry in the highly popular Art Deco style in the 1920s, discusses plastic costume jewelry and how it became the embodiment of the modern '20's and also how it became a highly popular asset to the mass manufacturing industry. The third chapter deals with the highly popular taste for exoticism in the 1920s and how this craze greatly influenced mass manufacturers and costume jewelry designers into creating low priced jewels that brought escapism and romanticism into the clean geometry of 1920s costume jewelry.

Chapter 1

Costume jewelry has had its roots in the fashion centre of Paris since 1767, where Paris was the base for three hundred bijoutiers faussetiers. By 1869, twenty-eight of these companies centred in Le Marais, Rue Charlot, Rue de Gravillers, Rue de Temple, Rue des Archives, Rue Pastourelle and Rue de Verts decided to unite under the 'Chambres Syndical de Graveurs Estampeurs et Appreteurs', to protect their general interests. By 1873, they had formed under the trade-union BOCI, calling themselves, "*Federation of Makers of Gilt Costume Jewelry, Costume Jewelry for Mourning, made of steel, tortoise-shell, etc*". The entire neighbourhood was traditionally populated by skilled metal workers, foundries, forges and plating establishments, specializing in non-precious ornaments. At this time, the main purpose of non-precious jewelry was that of imitating precious or fine jewelry.

The term costume jewelry is a twentieth century phenomenon, and according to Jane Mulvagh the term was first used in 1933 in the New Yorker magazine. (Mulvagh J, 1988, P 13). Costume jewelry before this had many pseudonyms. In 1901 the Chambre de Syndicale in Paris decided on 'fantasy jewelry' while others preferred titles such as fashion, trinket or novelty jewelry. The use of valueless materials for decorative and novel effect had been considered appropriate at various times throughout history but at no point was it related to fashionable dress. Edwardian couturiers adorned dresses with heavy glass bead work and 'faux' pearls to emphasise women's decorative role as a conspicuous extension of their husband's wealth, while mourning jewelry made of jet or glass substitute stood for the rigid sartorial etiquette which costume jewelry was trying to subvert. By 1909 semi precious and imitation ornaments were gaining acceptance

amongst women. However these pieces were displayed with discretion and restraint and many women would be wary of donning anything but formal fine jewelry for evening wear.

Everything about Victorian fashions was restrained yet ornamental, and this was mirrored in the classical style of the fine and imitation jewelry made at this time. It was a style governed on balance and harmony, and in this sense was opposed to the idea of jewelry as a creatively free expression, unshackled by a preconceived idea of what is beautiful. Fashion dictated that women should appear chaste and refined, but at the same time luxurious and glamorous, thus many fashion conscious women who could not afford fine jewels, turned to imitations. Imitation jewelry varied considerably in price and quality, such as the many pieces sold as expensive up-market accessories, like the skillfully crafted pastes of Cartier and Boucheron to trinkets made of rhinestone and marcasite sold in leading department stores. These trinkets were turned out by manufacturers who also made hair combs, handbags and buttons, and the jewels that they created mimicked the real thing at a fraction of the cost. These frankly fake reproductions aroused the suspicion and scorn of conservative circles. One periodical *The Lady's Realm* of 1848, commented, "*the craze for imitation jewellery of a cheap kind is much to be deplored, for one reason that it is so over done. Little lace broaches, pins etc. are charming, but we have often sighed to see an otherwise well dressed woman spoilt by the donning of gim crack chains, bracelets, etc.*". (Mulvagh J, 1988, P25) The fashionable were consequently hesitant and cautious of wearing non-precious jewelry due to the stigma attached. However various factors were to erode these prejudices.

The Art Nouveau movement reacted against mass-produced jewelry and was influential in ratifying semi- or non-precious jewellery in all social circles. Art Nouveau, or new art, was an artistic revolution at the turn of the century, which aimed



(plate 6) The *Duchess of Marlborough* wearing her deep choker necklace illustrates the retractive clothing of the Edwardian era, and the trend for pearls.

at changing the derogatory image of the so called minor arts. The movement was at its purest form in France, but many French critics have often attributed the first signs of artistic discontent to the English school of Arts and Crafts, and this most probably influenced the French to a great degree. According to historian Vivienne Becker '*The major principles of Art Nouveau shifted the emphasis away from monetary value onto modern design and artistry, turning trivial trinkets into works of art*' (Becker V, 1991, P17) however humble or common the materials. The movement was the nucleus of the popular culture of the day, and was a sign of everything modern to come. This new style displayed a distinct iconography composed of symbols representing the magnificent mysteries of death and rebirth embodied in the ever recurring theme of woman. The most powerful image was perhaps woman as half insect, half woman symbolising the metamorphosis of a new century, a new art, and more significantly, a new femininity.

Women's changing role in society and their own changing views of their femininity spurred the imagination of jewelers who envisioned this new woman as a figure with wild flowing hair suggesting an unleashing of energy and passion symbolising victorian women's rebirth as an active role player in a new age. If jewelry had to be '*the most intense expression of Art Nouveau*' then most certainly this image of woman became the most intense expression of Art Nouveau jewelry. (Becker V, 1988, P30) It is hardly surprising then, that this new jewelry greatly influenced women's former ideas about adornment. Thus, many women no longer wore jewels that were a symbol of their husbands wealth and prosperity but donned the new modern style that expressed their hopes and dreams of everything new to come.

From the mid 1890's, the two new galleries 'L'Art Nouveau' led the way by selling a wide range of jewelry created by talented designers in the modern style, including the French artist Rene Lalique. Lalique chose materials of glass and horn solely for their



(plate 7) The image of a woman's face and wild flowing hair was greatly reproduced by Costume Jewelry manufacturers in the 1900s.

beauty and texture, along with their relevance to his ideas and themes, regardless of their value. He was responsible for destroying old barriers and freed jewelry from the tyranny of the diamond. In this way, he liberated designers from the restrictions of traditional design by using dream-like imagery to express the hopes and fears of his age, freeing them from the boundaries of conventional precious materials and daring to mix horn and glass.

So strong and beautifully executed were his pieces that they gradually influenced other designers and artists, thus his unique iconography found its way into popular culture as affordable mass produced jewels all over the world. Although his jewels were labelled art jewels as opposed to costume jewelry, they played a vital role in the integration of the new style. The company of Piel Freres marked an important link between Art nouveau and twentieth century costume jewelry. Belt buckles were the speciality of the house, and these tended to be large and bold expressions of the latest fashions. It was one of the first companies to substitute celluloid for ivory and copper and gilt for gold. In "Art et Decoration " in 1900, the critic Leonce Benedite commented, *"It is in this way that so much progress can be made in bringing some feeling for art to the general public, who are used to shoddy mass-produced goods"*.(Becker V, 1991,)

At the Exposition Universelle in Paris, 1900, several firms were praised for their inexpensive jewels, among them Victor Prat who was known for his work in steel and filigré and the Maison Savard who created buttons, pendants and buckles in rolled gold. Medals were made by various jewellers, firstly in silver, then in even cheaper metals for an ever widening clientele. The jewelry at the exposition of 1900 was highly praised by many french critics, and in "Art et Decoration " in 1900 Leonce Benedite commented *"Mucha style hair , swooning women, irises, thistles; but some pieces in patinated metal, or enameled, with some inexpensive stones here and there, are in particularly*



(plate 8) An example of semi-precious Art Nouveau jewelry, with bright enamelling and semi-precious stones.

good taste. It is in this way that so much progress can be made in bringing some feeling for art to the general public who are used to shoddy mass produced goods" .(Becker V, 1991, P 26) In Paris, Art Nouveau was all the rage , but in its strongest form admired only by the avant garde. In diluted and tamed versions it appealed to chic high fashion followers and in turn inspired mass manufacturers to produce jewels in the diluted form.

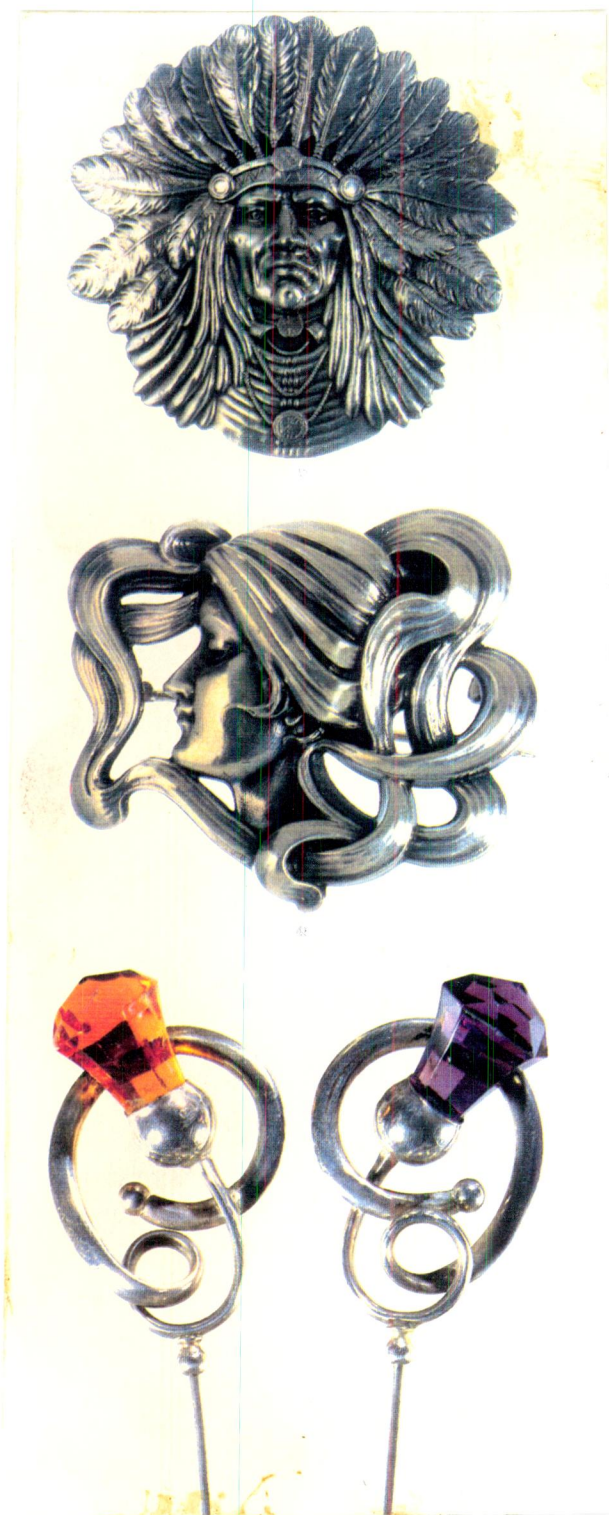
The quantities of tasteful original and low priced jewelry at the Exposition had an enormous influence on manufacturing centres all over Europe and the U.S.A by demonstrating that a new outlook to design combined with uncomplicated craft orientated techniques such as enameling can result in a new artistic and highly individual style.

The area of Gablonz in Prague, which had exported non-precious jewellery since the eighteenth century now capitalised on the new French style by excelling in enamelled belt buckles, usually in brighter colours than Parisian models. In conventionally smart circles particularly in England, Art Nouveau was considered to be in bad taste, possibly too sensuous and decadent². Thus the English preferred the celtic lines of the new Liberty trade name 'Cymric', inspired by the jeweller Archibald Knox. Liberty extended with the trade name 'Cymric' with the mass producers Haesler and Co, a company well equipped to translate these designs into modern inexpensive accessories, by enamelling and die-pressing techniques in the style of the Arts and Crafts school.

Charles Horner was the first pioneer of mass produced jewelry in Halifax, England. His jewelry production was remarkable because every stage of production, from design to the finished product was carried out in the factory. He imported machines from Germany which produced silver chains independently from other factories and massproduced costume jewelry in a diluted and simplified Liberty style.

In America, Tiffany and Co. were the artistic leaders in the design of individual jewelry and were greatly influenced by the Art Nouveau period. The two main

² Thus the English preferred the celtic lines of the new Liberty trade name 'Cymric', inspired by the jeweller Archibald Knox.



(plate 9) Hollow stamped and silver gilded American Costume Jewelry influenced by the Art Nouveau style with simple hat pins with coloured glass stones created by the factory Horner in Halifax England. c.1900s. right: Inexpensive brooches in a diluted 'Liberty' style

production centres of mass produced jewelry in America were New Jersey and Rhode Island. Rhode Island in particular was later to become the centre of the costume jewelry industry. Both places had been set up in the 19th century and by 1900 were successfully placed to produce jewels with a lively confident air, and a strong suggestion of Art Nouveau forms. Aside from this there were countless factories also producing cheap jewelry in the forms of buttons and brooches in silver or goldplated and stamped or hollow stamped in the new style.

While Art Nouveau was greatly responsible for a new appreciation of non precious jewelry, it did not totally dominate jewellery design and mainstream jewelry continued to flourish under companies like Cartier who catered for a clientele that preferred classical jewels in the 'Garland' style to Art Nouveau's unglamorous yet interesting designs.

Otherwise known as 'Edwardian' in England, the French title 'Garland' seems to be the more descriptive. It first emerged in the late 1800's and reached a peak around 1900 to 1915. The style was essentially an 18th century revival with its preferences for classical drapery, bow motifs, and laurel wreaths. This style spurred on by new discoveries in diamond cutting and paste was particularly light and dainty and was popular amongst fashionable Edwardian women. Pearls were also popular with women and achieved noble status in 1900. They increased in value far more than diamonds becoming outright signs of power, position and wealth.

At the height of pearl jewelry's popularity very good imitations were being made by French houses such as Richelieu and Tecla. The French were famous for manufacturing excellent pearls, and were highly skilled in producing the 'essence d'orient' which gave faux pearls their iridescence. Canvet of Paris specialised in pearls of a metallic finish and employed some three hundred workers in the production of high class imitation pearls. These imitation pearls became the height of fashion and ladies wore pearls like



(plate 10) This delicate 'Garland Style' was very popular with Edwardian ladies.





(plate 11) This group of Edwardian paste jewels showing the popular motifs, of flower baskets, hearts, and bows. The pendant on the right, is a suffragette jewel, incorporating the colours of the women's movement in 1905-15.



beads. The fashionable Edwardian women wore combinations of pearl collars, pearl earrings, and pearl sautoirs.

[Canvet of Paris specialised in pearls of metallic finish and employed some 300 workers. These became the height of fashion and ladies wore pearls like beads. Typical Edwardian women wore collars of pearls, earrings and pearl sautoirs.] Other kinds of very inexpensive imitation pearls were also on the market. In Bohemia and Russia a technique was used whereby a piece of mother of pearl shell would be cut so that a section of natural shell was left for the part that would be most visible, and then polished to give an illusionary pearlised effect.

Although Art Nouveau highlighted the prospect of jewelry as a art form, and challenged societies idea of it as status symbol, it was the influential and far reaching effects of the new movement Modernism that influenced fine and costume jewelers to move away from the elaborate ornamentation associated with Edwardiana to a more functional style. This pure clean style was infinitely suited to the machine and to the manufacturing techniques being used by costume jewelers. By the eve of the first world war the intricate delicate jewelry styles of the Edwardian years had been entirely replaced by larger simple pieces signifying the first unmistakeable steps of Modernism.

Due to the war, manufacturing of arms and ammunition took precedence over jewelry production and with the halting of imported materials such as imitation stones, the jewelry industry experienced a temporary shut down. The severity of the war also affected women's attitude to fashion and accessories and it gradually became vulgar and inappropriate to wear expensive jewelry, thus in keeping with the war effort, womens appearances became more restrained and conservative. Vogue considered it entirely appropriate that *"with the reduction of living to its simplest terms, jewels like the costume are marked by a new simplicity. The more ornate forms have given way to the clear cut designs plain almost to severity but full of new significance"* (Mulvagh J, 1988, P37)

By the early twenties costume jewelry came into its glamorous own. Parisien couturiers like Jean Patou and Gabrielle Chanel. began to create costume jewelry to compliment their new casual easy to wear fashions. Paris was the Mecca for all aspiring artists and designers, thus it was not surprising that this revolutionary new concept was to originate from such Parisian designers. Chanel's designs dominated the fashion aesthetic of the decade, but her work also bridged the pre- and post-war epoques, for she had already been experimenting with sports designs and material before 1914. She seized upon materials previously used solely for male sporting garb and underwear, jersey and grey flannel serving as a revolutionary means for her new designs. By 1913 she was devising cardigans and sweaters as fashion garments and by the 1920s, she had created an entirely new mode. Dress was no longer a matter of ornate display, instead fashion adopted the language of the streets and of the common man or woman. Jersey, corduroy and tweed, once used to make workmans or country clothes, were transformed into high-fashion garments through Chanel's skill and impeccable taste.

At this time, Chanel's creations were designed for the leisured rich, the new international set who travelled Europe and the U.S.A. in a restless search for seasonal diversions. The 'irony of her fashions', was that she gave the richest women in the world a look that was indistinguishable from that of a shop girl or office worker. The simplicity of her "poor look" inspired other international designers to emulate her designs for the mass market, thus allowing copied patterns to filter down to ordinary working women. Chanel's simple designs were the perfect foil for the ornate costume jewelry that she created. She was the first couturier to include costume jewelry regularly as an important asset to the whole look of her collections while complimenting the perfect tailored simplicity that is the hallmark of her clothes. She was to become a pioneer in making costume jewelry tasteful, widely acceptable to other couturiers, and inevitably to the public .



(plate 12) Chanel's jersey suits marked a radical change in high fashion clothing for women. Her casual designs were to emancipate women's clothing everywhere.

The trendsetting Chanel had the greatest impact on destroying the stigma of wearing non-precious gems. She found a midway line between unimaginatively ostentatious forms and cheap costume jewelry, giving costume jewelry the cachet it was previously lacking, making it not only acceptable but casual, yet expensive. Robert Goosens an important name in the history of Chanel's costume jewelry recalls that "Chanel could judge the final look of a suit or dress only when it was accompanied by its jewels. In her eyes the first was naked without the second" (Mulvagh J, 1988, P118).

Accessories were always an important part of her idea of fashion and she insisted on completing her comfortable yet handsome and elegant costumes with cascades of costume jewelry. She regarded jewelry as an adornment and ridiculed those who craved gems simply for their monetary value. She flaunted fake as a confidence symbol and stamped her blatantly faux creations with a highly original distinctive style which evolved from season to season. Chanel stated, it did not matter if jewels were real as long as they appeared like junk. Her cavalier attitude to value may be due to her many love affairs and as she mixed more and more in high society she may have regarded expensive jewels as a symbol of women's dependency on men and an obstacle to their ultimate freedom. and also her relationship with the Grand Duke Dimitri of Russia, who introduced her to unrestrained luxury, enabled Chanel to wear the most precious jewelry with an air of casual nonchalance. The Grand Duke Dimitri showered her with priceless Romanov jewels which she wore without reverence and in great numbers. These priceless jewels were the inspiration for many of her creations and indeed certainly attribute to the lavishness of her costume jewelry pieces.

Bored with the jewellery of Joalliers, she opened her shop in 1924 under the management of Count Etienne de Beaumont, and launched her "Vrais bijoux en toc collection" (fake jewelry that looks real). Chanel attributed costume jewelry with a new standard of excellence by always demanding durable objects of high quality, created

and finished in the same high standard as any fine jewelry item. She drew on a variety of exotic and oriental sources her preferences being the Renaissance jewels of the Medici, others included sumptuous Byzantine gems and the sparkling mosaics of Ravenna. Her interpretation of ornate Russian jewelry with long ropes of gilt chains hung with 'pate de verre crosses' proved to be immensely popular. De Beaumont not only supervised the style and decoration of jewelry but also contributed to the collections with his own innovative designs. Count Etienne Beaumont created long necklaces of multi coloured artificial stones with different textures updating Chanel's jewelry to accompany each season's clothes.

The Duke of Verdura also worked with Chanel when he arrived in Paris in 1926 . Formerly educated as a painter in Italy, his sense of colour is evident in his costume jewelry line for Chanel, featuring bead necklaces, oversize cruciforms and badges set with glass, semi precious stones and artificial pearls. He loathed the cruel and ostentatious display of large solitaires which he dismissed "as rocks" and their connoisseurship as "minerology". His line of jewelry proved to be influential to other costume jewelers, and popularised the use of semi precious stones and coloured glass. The 1926 Chanel line continues to be highly sought after today, and Verdura's 'white Maltese Cross' motifs which Chanel wore daily are now replicated in many colours. Chanel designed jewelry including precious materials and her own designs for necklaces of uncut diamonds and emeralds looked as though they were made of common glass. She also spaced diamonds a few inches apart on chains calling it 'River of Diamonds'. Chanel used a revolutionary concept of open settings for fake and semi-precious stones allowing the play of light, sometimes combining 'faux' pearls and glass.

The development of cultured pearls and the perfection of imitation pearls combined with Chanel's sanctioning of them was the most distinctive costume jewelry trend of the 1920s, and has remained a classical style ever since. In 1927 she introduced the



(plate 13) Chanel wearing rows of fake pearls and the famous pair of enamel and paste set bangles designed by Verdura.

style of a long sautoir of pearls mixed with coloured stones and glass. Owing to Chanel pearls lost their former demureness. She favoured pearls of all sorts as long as they were of excellent quality. Chanel was known to wear an entire vestee of real and false pearls around her throat with casual chic making pearls the essential modern accessory. Chanel's disregard for convention gained respect and status in fashionable and elite circles and encouraged many socialites to mix fake pearls with real ones, often to make a necklace appear more spectacular. Chanel's pearl sautoir rapidly caught on and soon the necklace was paired with sweaters, suits and evening gowns. As far as Chanel was concerned there were no longer places where the wearing of jewelry would be in bad taste, and so elegant women everywhere wore jewelry on the beach and in the sea. Fashionable women followed her trends from season to season and longed to look rich and understated. She created jewelry that was no longer reserved for gorgeous fabrics or for formal parties and that went well with also jerseys, tweeds and pullovers. In London, Chanel never failed to surprise and accompanied her day outfits with jewelry that no women in good society would have previously dared show unless she was wearing a long dress.

By 1925 costume jewelry was firmly established. Other designers recognised the rising popularity of costume jewelry as another way of stamping their look on a client, thus costume jewelry became an indispensable addition to their collections. Elsa Schiaparelli was another notable couturier to include costume jewelry in her collections, and was incidentally Chanel's rival. While Chanel became revered for her chic austere designs, Schiaparelli teased and shocked the public with her eccentric nonconformist creations. She introduced a nonconformist aesthetic and raised costume jewelry to an art form, often using her severely stark lines of tight black suits as a type of canvas on which to display her jewelry creations. One of her innovations was turning clothes fasteners, belt buckles, zips, hooks into important decorative features that became

the nucleus of her repertoire of costume jewelry. Her originality was profoundly influenced by avant garde movements such as Dadaism and Surrealism, and would often collaborate with artists Salvador Dali and Jean Cocteau to create dreamlike unpredictable pieces such as Dali's plastic bee or Cocteau's lacquered eye brooch which became classic pieces. Schiaparelli utilized a wide range of materials such as rubber, ceramics and wood, setting an example and inspiring many designers to take her lead.

"There is no doubt that fashion has given impetus to the production and distribution of these trinkets. From a place of little significance they have attained a position of economic dignity and importance" *quoted The New York Times in 1929* (All that glitters, 1920's Jody Shields)

Parisian creators set the trends but it was in America during 1920s that the costume jewelry industry came into its own. America was well placed to apply the new manufacturing techniques to the jewelry field, and where Paris had led the trend for costume jewelry it was America that chiefly propagated it. Less bound by craft traditions than European countries and less inhibited by old bureaucracies and styles America was undergoing a full scale industrialisation and this was reflected in the jewelry industry as much as any other.

Costume jewelry turned out three types of jewelry, bonfide couture originals, their copies and mass market pieces. Top American costume jewelry empires such as The Napier Company manufactured private label couture jewelry copies. Couture jewelry originals and their copies looked nearly identical. But whereas the original made in Paris may have been plated with real gold or silver, the cheaper American copy would have less expensive materials such as white metal or aluminium, and whereas the stones in the originals would be set by hand the stones in the copies would be glued in..

On the level below couture jewelry was mass market jewelry and although sometimes as expensive as couture pieces, it lacked the cachet of the famous name.

New York City and Providence Rhode Island were the primary manufacturing centres for these generally low priced goods. These centres ceased to simply import or copy European role models and began to experiment with new techniques and materials of its own. Improvements in technology such as casting drop pressing and chain meshing, cheap immigrant labour and the sheer vastness of America ensured costume jewelry into becoming a major industry in the USA exporting all over America, Britain and the Continent. Costume jewelry companies from New York to Rhode Island mass produced components such as buttons, and metres of chain which were often supplied to other mass manufacturers. More significantly, these companies in particular the Napier Co. produced eye catching and glamorous jewelry in the latest styles and also limited edition pieces, which were not directly linked to fashion collections but were certainly influenced by a season's look.

By the end of the 20's the new wonder material plastic revolutionised the costume jewelry industry, creating a new cheaper market of costume jewelry that was bright, fun and inexpensive. Plastics encouraged the rapid production of novelty jewelry. Plastic novelty jewelry represented the fads and fancies of the 20's, and appealed to those who were looking for cheerful, witty, yet inexpensive items..The range of novelty jewelry increased even without couturier approval, and ranged from lucky souvenirs to earrings bringing humour and imagination into the mass market industry. American and Continental women welcomed costume jewelry more readily than their British counterparts and they were able to purchase 'a string of beads for every dress' at department stores like Woolworths, dime stores and street vendors, ensuring that costume jewelry was to become an essential part of every woman's wardrobe whether it be a Chanel copy or a novelty piece priced at ten cents.

The end of the first World War hailed the popularity of costume jewelry as a legitimate fashion accessory. Before the war, non-precious jewelry had little

fashionable credibility and the restrictive, elaborate styles of the Edwardian years limited costume jewelry to the realm of imitation. The social and economic upheavals of the war changed women's attitudes to fine jewelry, as it had become frivolous and unpatriotic. The Art Nouveau movement initiated a change in women's perceptions towards semi-precious jewelry. It became a vehicle for personal expression and identity, rather than for its monetary value. More significantly, it was the combined efforts of couturiers and manufacturers that launched costume jewelry as a lucrative, stylish accessory. Couturiers like Chanel, had created a new form of non-precious ornament, that was chic and obviously fake. Improvements in mass-manufacturing techniques enabled producers to take advantage of this, ensuring a high output of inexpensive costume jewelry, which was no longer inferior, but sophisticated and totally modern.

Chapter 2

Pure sober refined lines and clean surfaces were the principle elements of decoration and the basis of modern taste and design in the 1920s. Art Deco embodied these aspects with an opulent and elusive spirit and characteristically streamlined aerodynamic shapes, that contrasted dramatically with strong colours. Art Deco was not a movement and had no founders or direct manifesto. It happened partly as a reaction of designers and decorators in post-war Paris to the demands of a completely restructured society that rejected stuffy Victorian morals and partly in reaction to the excessive curves of the Art Nouveau movement.

The basic aim was to do away with all necessary ornament, and to streamline shapes and outlines.

This geometric yet luxurious style derives its name from the famous 'Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes' held in Paris in 1925. As early as 1907, Roger Marx had written that, "the new exhibition was to be the landmark which would signify the end of the contempt directed at the machine". (Arwas, Victor, 1992, P. 21) However, due to the destruction of World War I, and bickering amongst its members, the Societes des Artistes et Decorateurs postponed the exhibition until 1925. By this time, its character was well removed from its original intention, with one main factor remaining constant, that it was not to be a historical exhibition celebrating the past, but a forward looking one, open to all artists and manufacturers that would clearly show modern tendencies. The essentially decorative style of Art Deco was applied to every aspect of design, from skyscrapers to cutlery, ashtrays and jewelry.

The exhibition in 1925, proved to be the fullest expression of this artistic aesthetic.

Art Deco was marked by a return to symmetry faceted surfaces, geometric shapes, stylisation of decorative motifs and strong colour contrasts. Style and stylisation were the distinguishing marks of Art Deco, meaning that the surface treatment was the essence of the style, not a re-working or a radical rethinking of problems. Sumptuousness became the keynote which often took precedence over function. Although Art Deco is usually identified with a look of stylish geometry, the term can be divided into two main stages, early Art Deco and Modernism. Early Art Deco is characterised as classical, mostly based on 18th century styles. Edwardian motifs of garlands and flowers were still evident, but were flattened and stylised to look angular and unrealistic, while the sinuous curves reminiscent of Art Nouveau were straightened into simple ovals and circles. The advanced stage Modernism, was a style that grew after the 1925 exhibition, and was marked by a stark simplicity with strong abstract forms and a total suppression of colour and unnecessary decoration. Both stages are apparent and interpreted profusely in costume jewelry. Painting, tapestry and graphics like costume jewelry were based partly on a return to classicism and partly on the absorption of surface mannerisms and avant garde movements such as the Bauhaus. Founded by Walter Gropius in Germany in 1919, the Bauhaus rejected romantic expression in favour of functional and rational designs and recognised an increasing dependence on machines for mass production.

Art Deco was essentially a French style, developed in France by designers who came from a tradition of craftsmanship, hence, while the Germans were adapting their designs for the machine and mass production, French designers found it difficult to completely rid their designs of decoration and also their distrust of the machine produced art objects. However, the machine was admired for its speed and power and many French designers recognised Marinetti's futuristic 'Manifesto'. This 'Manifesto' brought forward the idea of the machine is symbolising the new modern world, and



(plate 14) A group of paste jewels showing the gradual change from a restrained Edwardian look to a colourful geometric Art Deco style.

sought to break with a iconoclastic approach to the images of the past with a loose form of anarchic faith.

The origins of this decorative style can be traced back to the revolutionary liberation of colour at the Fauvist Exhibition at the Salon d'Automme in 1905. Four years later, Diaghileu brought his Ballet Russes to Paris where the striking colours of the costumes devised by Bakst were quickly noted by artists and critics. This profoundly affected the tastes of the time and inevitably prompted the use of powerful and constrasting colours. Parallel to the development of Art Deco were a number of artistic movements which undoubtedly impacted on this style. Cubism revolutionised the ways of seeing and interpreting form and could certainly be included in contributing to the extreme geometric approach of Art Deco. The new Italian movement of futurism introduced the concept of motion and constructivism added geometrics. The influences of Bauhaus functionalism and the purist movement, began to infiltrate contemporary design and prompted French designers not to discard decoration, but to replace the ornamental with pure lines, hence translating their work towards a new popular language. At the same time, the ordered decoration of orphism and the Cubist textiles of Sonia Delaunay should not be forgotten. Oriental Art also left a strong impression on the Art Deco style, as it's influence was being particularly revealed in the intensity of colour and the importance of colour contrasts, which characterises the Art Deco palette. New archeological finds also provided other sources of inspiration and generated manias for Eygptian decorative motifs, like scarabs and hieroglyphics.

These chief characteristics of Art Deco were reflected magnificently in personal adornment, whether real of fake. The exhibition of 1925 revealed a glittering display of new jewelry shimmering with various colours and multiple shapes of precious, semi-precious and hard stones. Fine jewelry was characterised by stylised motifs of baskets of flowers, trceries of leaves, octagonal panels and prismatic geometrical forms. One



(plate 15) A group of galalith and coloured silver pendants pins and bracelets by Louis Collomb, clearly showing the influences of the Far East.





(plate 16) Group of French silver and paste jewels created to look like precious diamond Art Deco jewelry.

of the most important aspects of Art Deco jewelry, real or fake, was the use of new cuts of diamonds. The cutting and setting of diamonds had improved enormously and new shapes for stones had been developed to suit the new geometric designs. Baguette cuts and little square cuts added a clean crispness to real 1920s jewels. To contrast the artful splendour of diamond and platinum, jewelers turned to enamel and black onyx, into which the diamond was set. The taste for Chinese motifs was seen in rings and brooches which were set with thin squares of black onyx. Where appropriate or where the armature was too slender to take the onyx, the metal itself was enamelled black or laquered depending on the base.

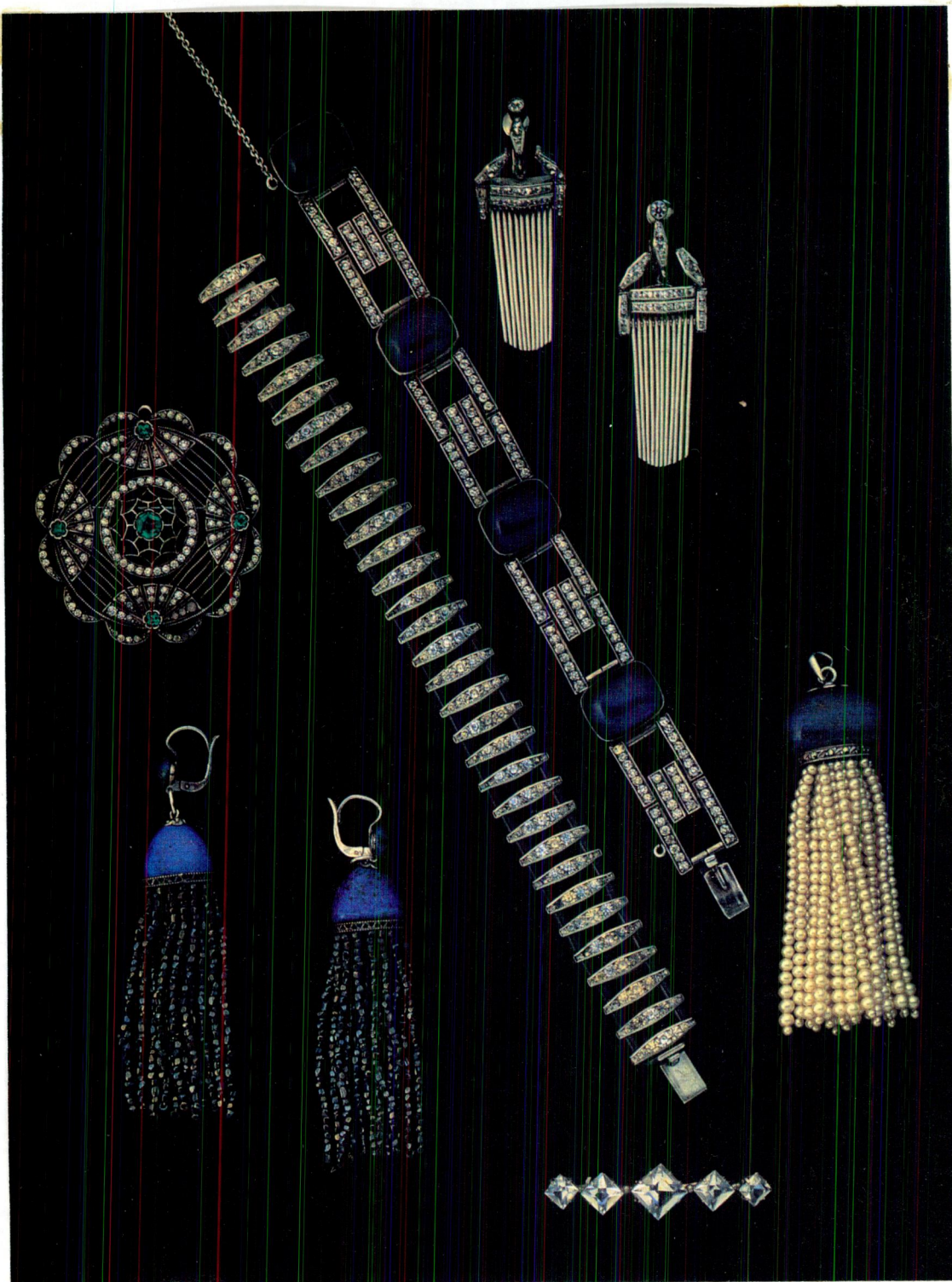
A touch of colour was occasionally introduced as additional contrast. The powerful influence of the Orient could be seen in the use of semi-precious stones, such as jade and ivory, along with precious gems. Away from the world of commercial mainstream ideas, the influences of the machine age were apparent in the sophisticated, well defined shapes of the artist jewelers, George Fouquet and the zig-zag patterns of George Sandoz.

If the high fashion jewelry of the Art Deco period reflected in its magnificence and its novelty of conception, that is, the ostentation of an exceptional epoch, the same is also true of the costume jewelry of the period. The latter reflected the evolution of taste and the various intellectual currents of the time, but was also the product of a popular art, aimed at the widest possible diffusion, from Europe to America. Thus, the general aesthetic of Art Deco was seen more clearly defined in costume jewelry.

The 1920s signalled an age of untempered luxury and innovative designs in costume jewelry. Through the twenties, there was still a market for glossy realistic paste jewels. The best jewels were made in France, America and Pforzheim in Germany. In England they all became known as 'french jewels' and were sold in a variety of shops from good jewelry shops to department stores.



(plate 17) Silver necklace and clip of excellent quality set with paste and black glass imitating 'onyx' in the geometric style of real jewels.



(plate 18) A collection of white metal and paste jewels with imitation stones, showing the highly popular tastes for tassels.



They were well made jewels and were sometimes combined with fake 'onyx', in the Art Deco style. Paste was widely used in pendants of rectangular plaque shapes, while other pendants were more fluid, based on stylised waterfall designs, hung on slender paste set chains. The new supple movement of bracelets, chains, beads and tassels, became reflective of a new energetic sporty woman with a long slim tubular silhouette. The new sleek silhouette called for costume jewelry and accessories of strings of fake pearls or paste sautoirs which were worn very long, sometimes to the knee.

Due to Chanel's sanctioning of non-precious jewelry, and new discoveries in America of materials such as rhodoid, galathea and nacrolite, from which ornaments in a variety of colours could be mass produced, the range of costume jewelry grew extremely wide. Many of its products whether high class imitations or well designed mass produced pieces clearly showing the influences of fine jewelry trends. Costume jewelry replicated all the most daring innovations, using new non precious materials such as plastics and paint to replace jade, onyx and lacquer and imitation pearls to replace gemstones, while pastes imitated diamonds. The strict designs in black and white rock crystal, were here translated into plastics and enamels.

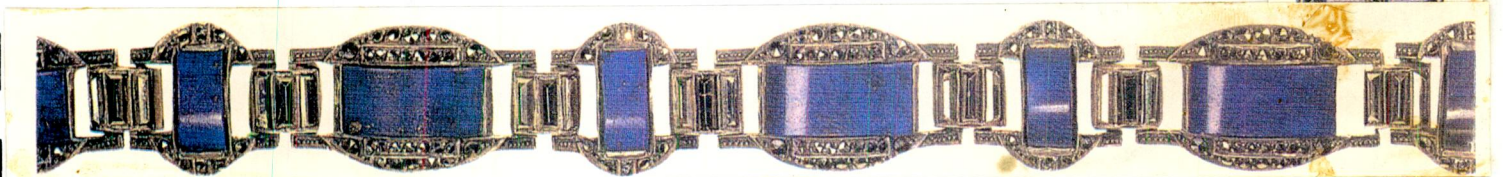
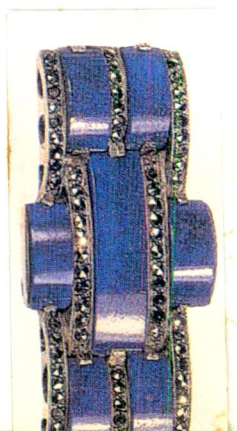
Exoticism was by no means deterred by the invaluable materials used, and all the motifs Egyptian and Chinese for example, were also to be found in costume jewelry. Oriental long necklaces made of silken thread, were also quite common, knotted with spheres of ivory. Many artist jewelers turned their talents to the humbler materials and created daring yet simple streamlined pieces. Raymond Templier produced enamel brooches based on geometric shapes, and George Fouquet created streamlined brooches of silver crystal and brilliants. The clean simplicity of their work was to have a tremendous influence on the design and production of plastics at this time.

The widespread introduction of synthetic plastics during the Art Deco period marked the beginning of a new type of jewelry that embodied the purest form of the

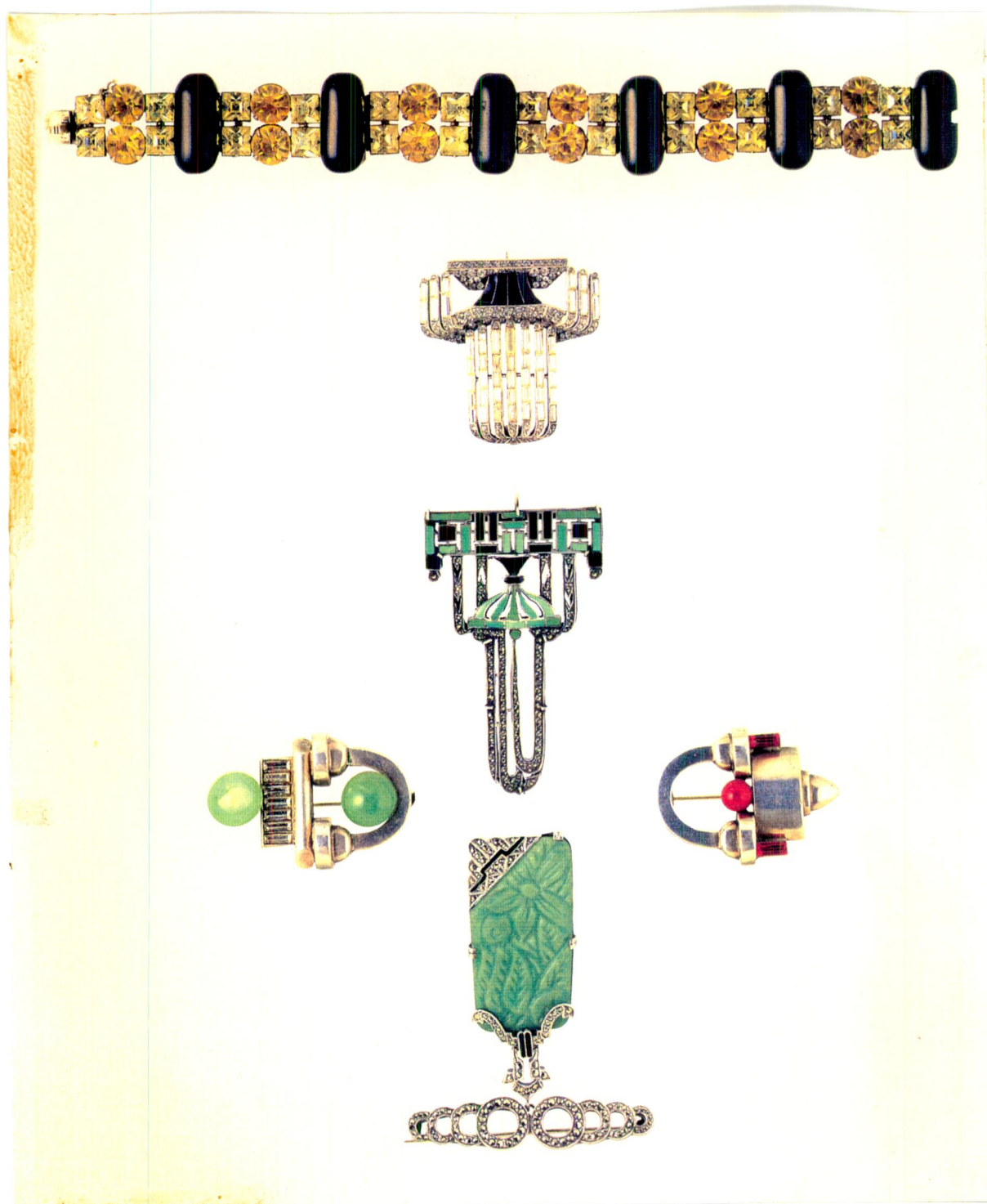


(plate 19) A collection of marcasite jewelry in the Art Deco style.

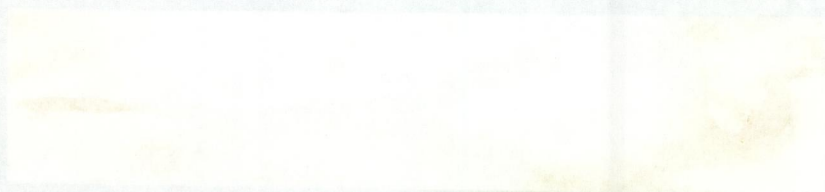




(plate 20) Galalith jewelry with silver marcasite bracelet and ring.



(plate 21) A collection of silver marcasite and carved bakelite jewelry.

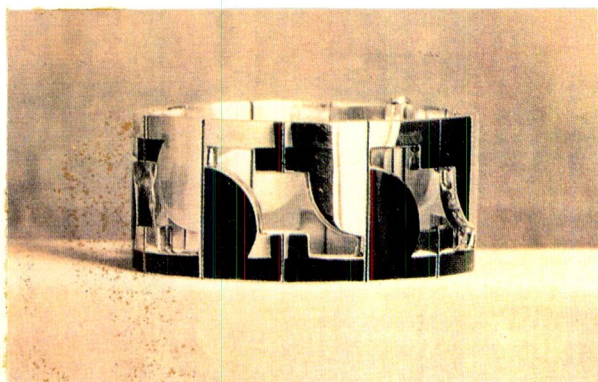
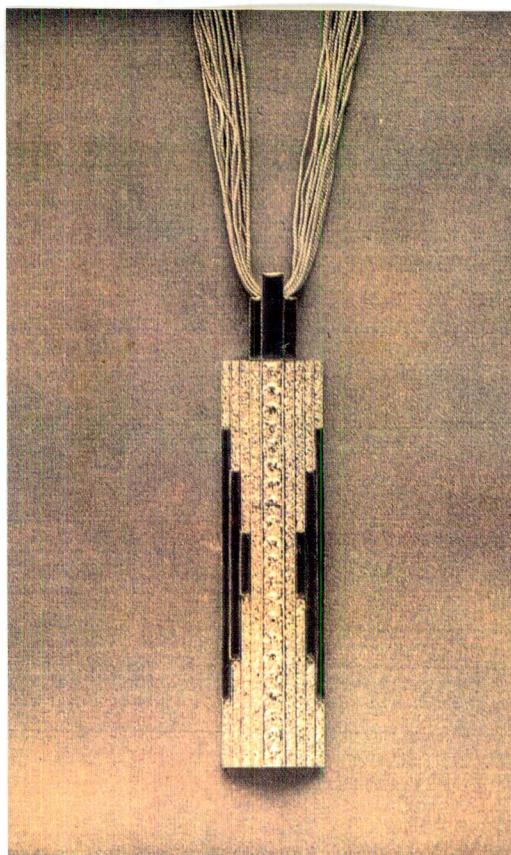
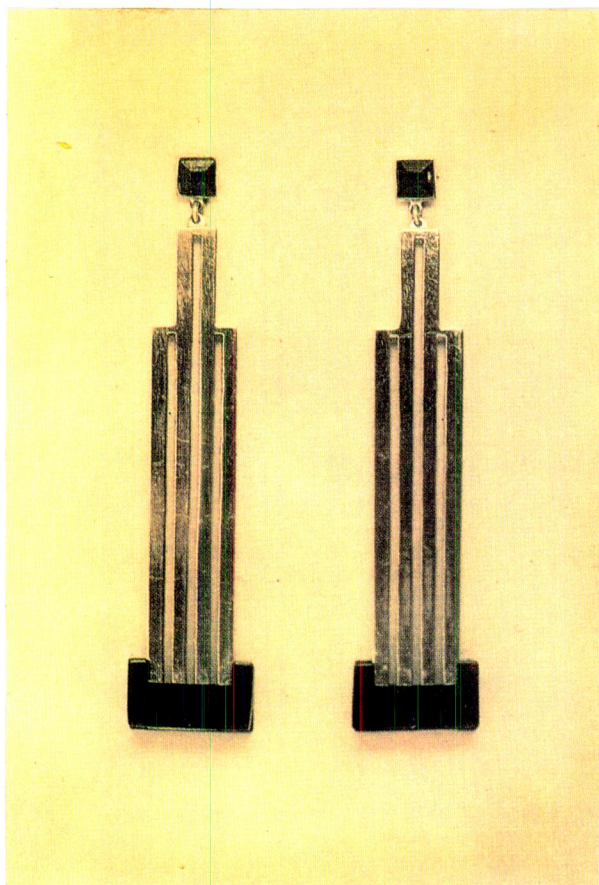


modern spirit, that was also available to the masses. The development of plastics opened up a world of new ideas and designs in costume jewelry, that made any design possible. All kinds of costume jewelry was created in every possible design, colour and texture, creating the most amazing effects. Where imagination in real jewels was defeated by the limitations of the cost and natural properties of materials, plastics stepped in and offered costume jewelry virtually no restrictions on the design or making of exciting pieces. Plastic epitomised the recklessness and extravagance of the 1920s. Plastic costume jewelry could look unbelievably sumptuous, sometimes outdoing the most extravagant jewels of the great fine jewelry houses. At the same time the low cost of plastics meant that jewelry could reflect the fleeting whims of fashion and could be discarded in favour of each new idea. This also meant that designers and craftsmen were not limited by wastage of mistakes, and experiment led to revolutionary results.

Bakelite, a phenolic resin became the best known plastics material to be used in Art Deco jewelry. Bakelite was created by Leo Baekeland in 1907. As the first synthetic plastic, it can be distinguished from other plastics by its depth, its heft, its shine and hardness. Proclaimed the material of a thousand uses, Bakelite was first employed in electrical insulation and heat resistant radio and telephone auto parts. It was not used in costume jewelry until around 1918. Great improvements in the 1920s enabled Bakelite to be moulded, cast and brightly coloured, red, green, yellow, maroon, brown and black were the whole spectrum. It could also be made to different degrees of opacity and translucency and also mottled and marbled. The Bakelite Corporation made two general categories of phenolic resin, the cast and the moulded types. Cast phenolic resins were used in jewelry because they possessed better decorative and colour properties and because they did not require expensive moulds and moulding equipment. Instead they were cast in liquid form and hardened slowly in ovens over a period of days eventually converted into consumer goods by machining.

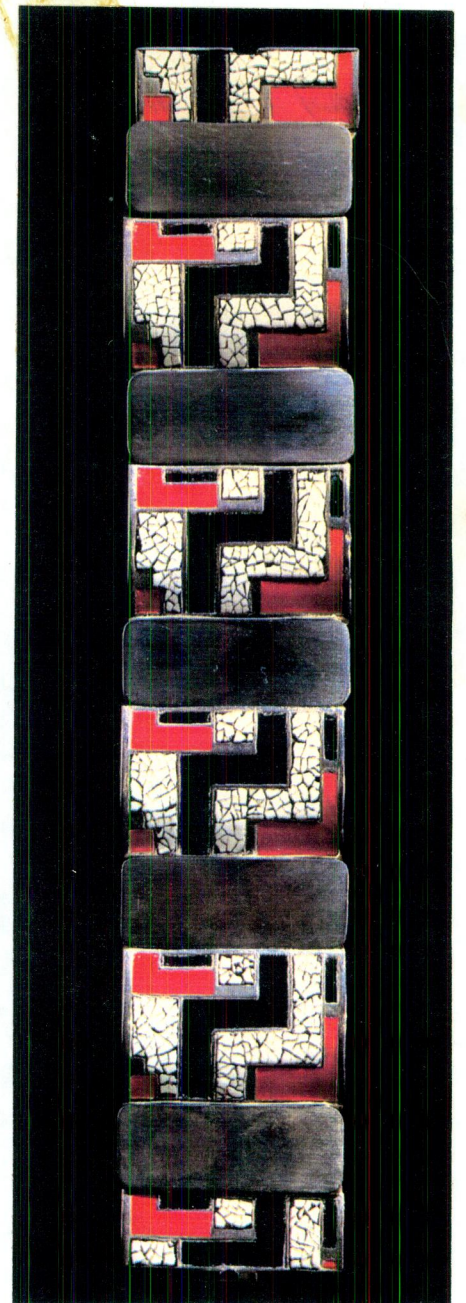
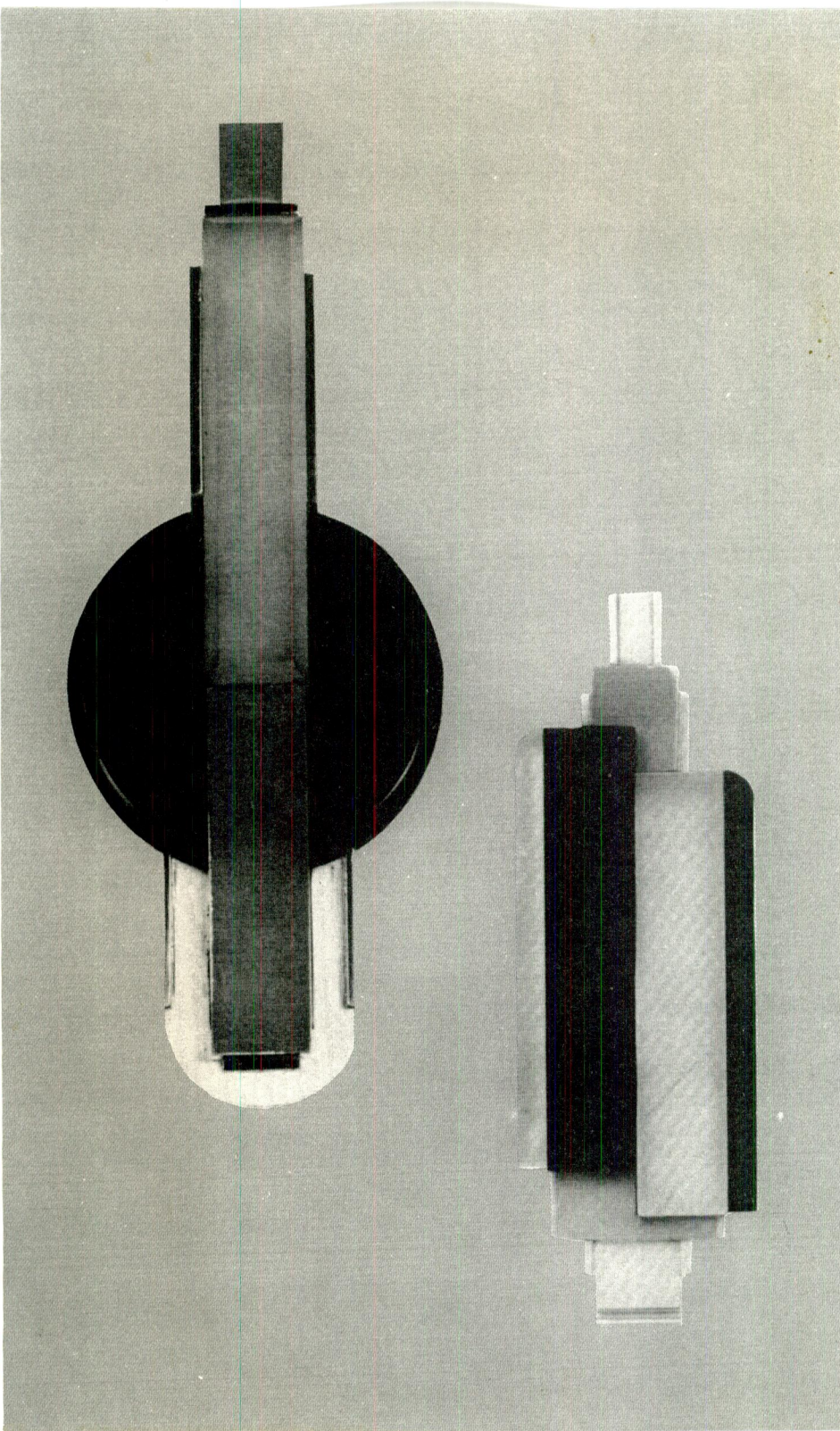


(plate 22) French silver necklace with black and green jade



(plate 23) Fine collection of jewelry by Raymond Templier clearly influenced by the sleek futuristic aspect of the Art Deco style.

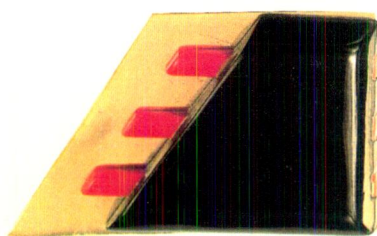
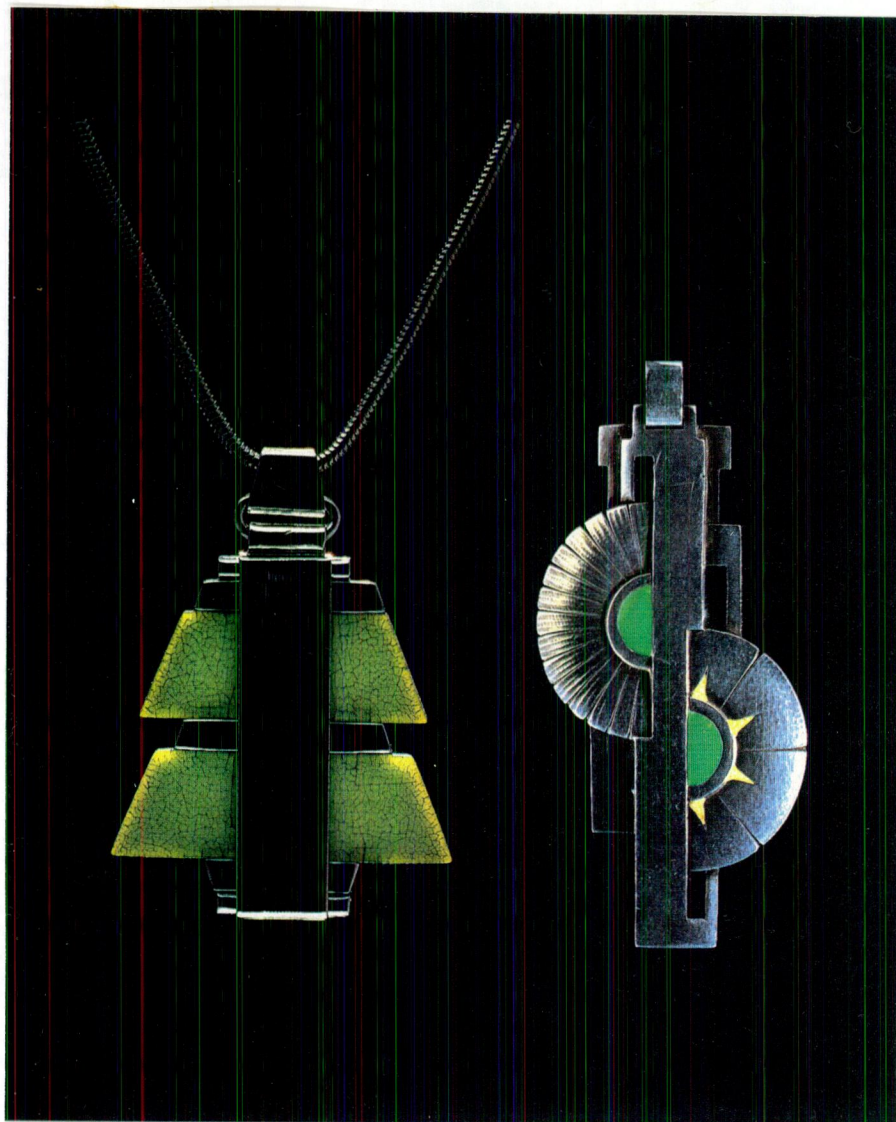




(plate 24) A fine example of strictly geometric pendants created by Gerard Sandoz. (right) French red and black enamel bracelet.

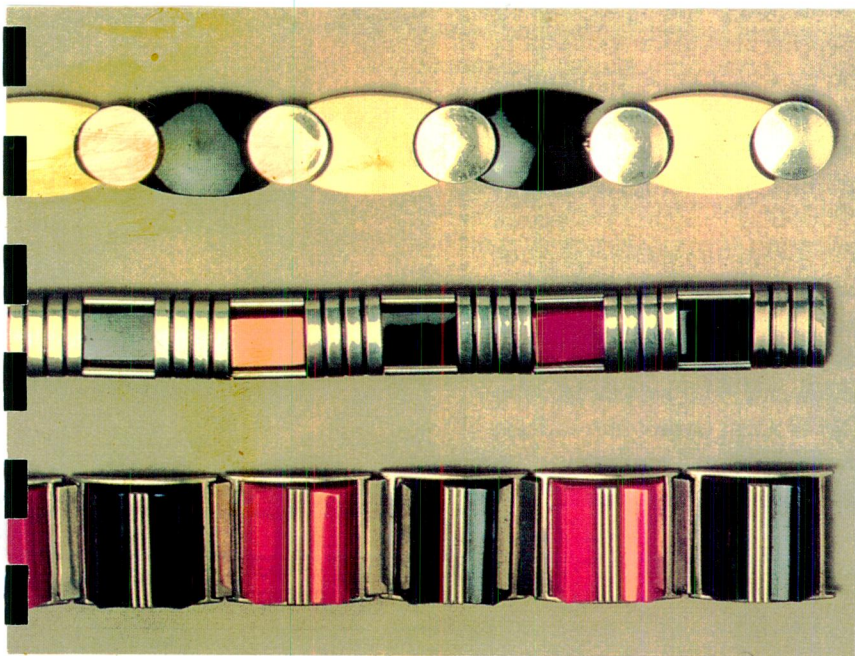
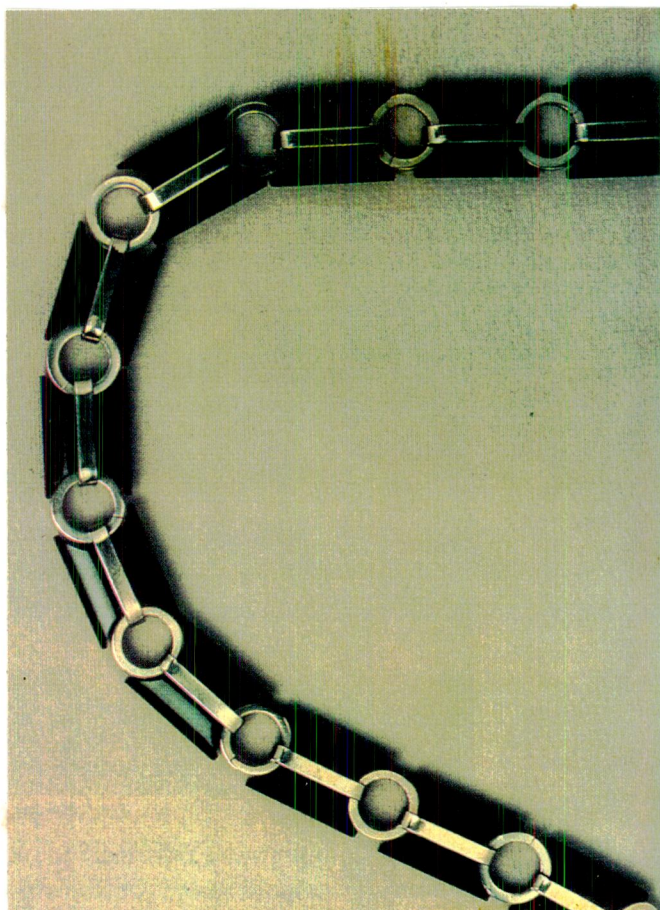
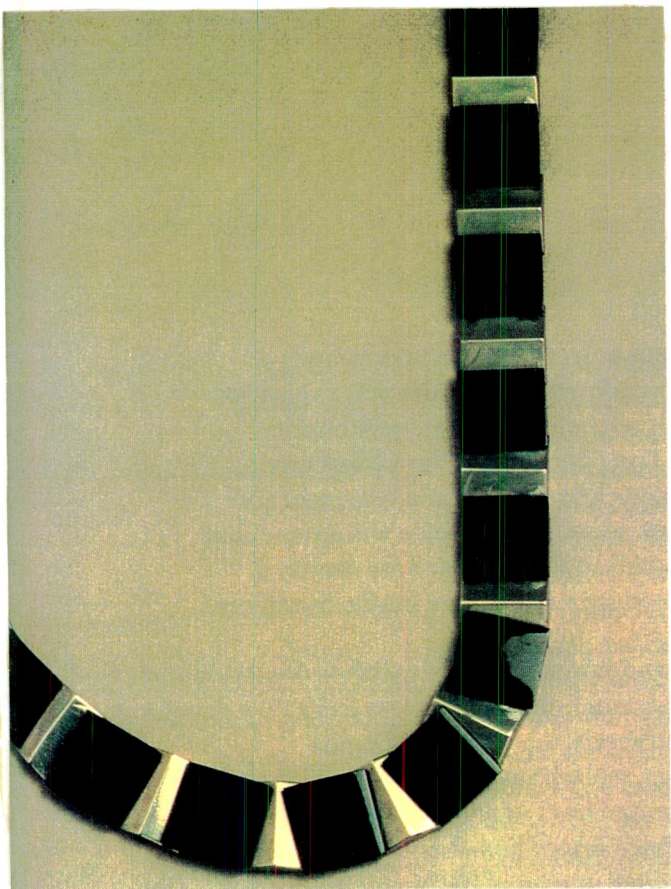
Bakelite used in jewelry was cast as rods, tubes and slabs, that were then easily sliced into individual pieces or blanks, which were worked by operators seated at semi automatic lathes and drills. Bracelets and rings were saved from tubes and carved by the worker who much like a glass etcher would hold the surface against the lathe to create a pattern and because of the heat resistant properties of the phenolics, the pieces could withstand the friction of the wheels without melting. Pins, clips and buckles were cut from patterns by means of a jigsaw, and then lathe carved or sliced from a rod which provided many duplicates of the same shape. At this time, it was not exactly an assembly line production method, because of the fact that each worker completed a piece entirely on their own. When operators completed these tasks, the pieces were taken and polished by processes which suited the piece, some were polished by revolving tumblers. Deeply carved pieces were ashed, and rubbed with a wet pumice until the surface became polished. Metal findings, such as clasps and pinbacks were added in the final stage by women using foot operated presses. These processes were for the simplest type of jewelry, which did not require piercing or stringing, inlaying, plating or handpainting. Techniques were developed for combining metals with plastics to impart a more legitimate look of 'real jewelry', strips of gilded or silvered metal would be hand wrapped, fitted into grooves or attached with tiny screws. Plating of entire pieces of plastic was not common until the 1940s, although attempted in 1910. Plastics that looked like amber or jade could be skillfully carved in a way that real materials could not withstand. Many manufacturers were still tempted to copy precious and semi-precious stones and much plastic jewelry still followed current designs. The most successful plastic jewels were unashamedly unprecious and flaunted their plastic appearance.

The era of plastics coexisted with Modernism and the functional mechanistic mood. The curator of Industrial Art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York acknowledged



(plate 25) A pendant with mouse-tail chain in chrome-plated metal and green bakelite. (right) Pendant, in cast silver with coloured enamels. (below) Pin, in chrome-plated metal, with red and black bakelite.





(plate 26) A collection of bakelite German jewelry with chrome-plated metal c. 1925-9.

the advancement of modern jewelry "Those who design jewelry today should realise that this is an age of locomotives, of automobiles and typewriters. The making of jewelry is an ancient craft and a noble one, but should it be less progressive than automobile manufacturing? The natural follow up in jewelry design would be the fashioning of ornaments in some modern substance — in the same way as Bakelite has been used in costume jewelry "(Shields, 1987, p24)

Thirsty for innovation, Art Deco Parisian designers were able to derive the greatest benefit from this new material which lent itself to the most daring experiments and produced the most remarkable results. Necklets were made up of flat geometric slices or chunks imitating the highly popular onyx and ivory, finished with sparkling pastes. Fringe necklaces with flat or wedge shaped were combined with red, green and mustard plastics. Chrome and plastic were a popular combination evoking the spirit of the machine age and these jewels mostly were abstract and sleek. A more conventional effect was achieved by adding marcasite to plastic geometric pendants. Lacquers and enamels complimented the smooth surfaces of well designed plastics.

The great vogue for bracelets at this time opened up an enormous field of experimentation. Designs in the form of solid bangles varying in size and amount of decoration usually imitating jade or ivory in plastic resin, bakelite, or celluloid, were mass produced. There also existed articulated bracelets composed of motifs decorated with designs in relief or metallic inlays, linked to each other by an elastic cord. The vast range also included brooches, clips, belt buckles and of course, rings. The creations of Parisian designers such as Chanel and the creative designs of Auguste Bonaz enabled plastics to be seen as an art form and an important costume jewelry accessory.

His jewelry range included pendants, necklaces and bracelets, which displayed various influences, from Russia to the Far East and always of remarkable quality. Bonza's creations were pure simple linear abstract forms completely free of surface



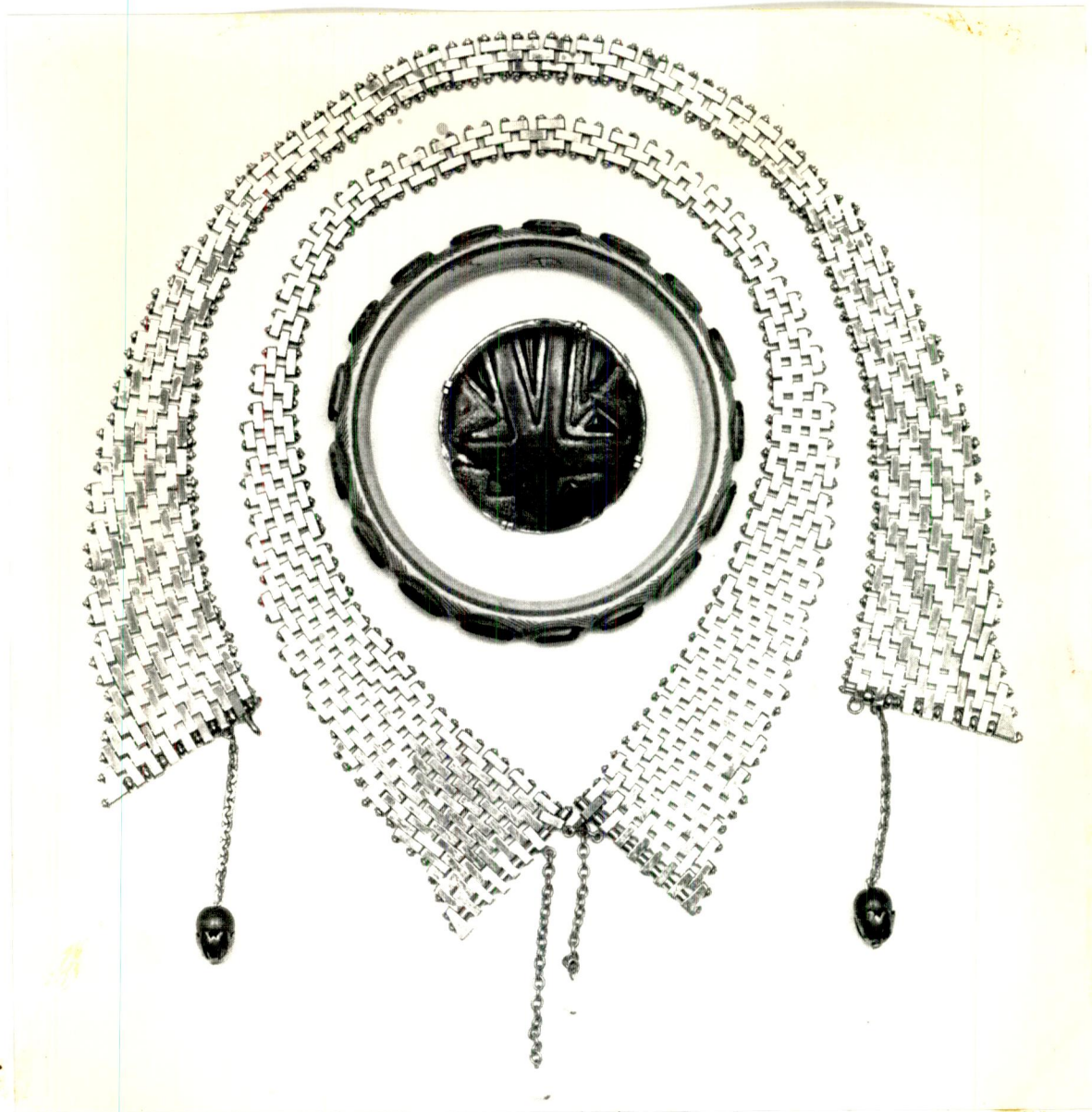
(plate 27) Elegant necklace with pastes and bakelite.





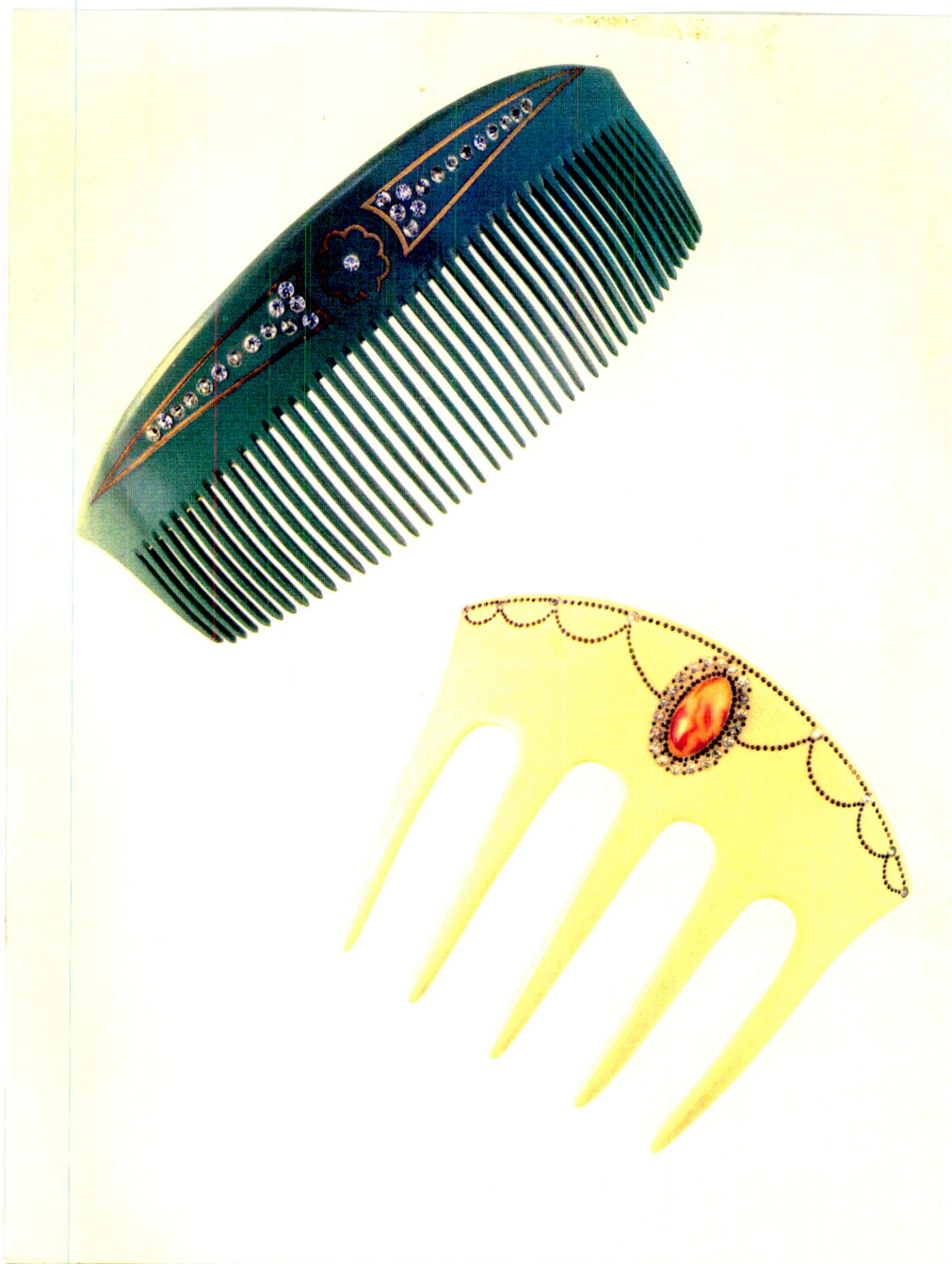
(plate 28) Unusually large chrome necklace with bakelite imitating jade.





(plate 29) Chrome-plated chain collars and bracelet with plastic ladybird motifs.





(plate 30) Two bakelite combs, one imitating ivory with tortoiseshell cabachon both by Auguste Bonaz.





(plate 31) Pendants with coloured galaith by Auguste Bonaz
in the modern style. c. 1928



ornament. His necklaces of stamped galalithe in particular, show a love for the simplicity of Modernism. Bonaz juxtaposed colours with an innate artistic sense and reveals the sensuousness and elegance of such an unromantic man made material. The strongly , contrasting shapes of circles, ovals and squares were elegantly fluid and show a deep appreciation and understanding of plastic. Bonaz gave plastics the glamour it was lacking, and pushed it's boundaries as no jeweler had done before. He also designed for mass manufactured plastics and was the founder of Maison Bonaz, the leading costume jewelry company in Oyonnax, France at this time. Maison Auguste Bonaz greatly diversified their productions and are credited with creating 'outfits' of costume jewelry as he understood that women wanted jewelry to compliment and co-ordinate the colour of their hair, their moods and passing whims.

The city of Oyonnax in France, is considered the capital of plastics in Europe, because of it's high numbers of plastic manufacturers. Oyonnax was mainly known for it's distribution of combs and other ornaments carved traditionally of horn and ivory. However, with the arrival of plastics, craftsmen easily adapted their talents to the softer celluloid. The shortening of womens hair also affected French distributors and the Oyonnax manufacturers were obliged to diversify to other categories of costume jewelry, that although sometimes were mass produced, were never distributed on as broad a scale as in the USA. There were many manufacturers of costume jewelry at Oyonnax. Some specialised in the production of cheaper varieties, and in large numbers at popular prices, other companies such as Louis Collomb, operated at a crafts level, producing high quality jewelry. Oyonnax's leading company, Maison Bonaz created products ranging from simple colourful combs distributed at reasonable prices to hat pins, belt buckles and buttons. Increasing pressures to offer competitive prices in America led more and more American costume jewelry manufacturers to shift away from craft orientated construction to mass production pieces, and many found that



(plate 32) Sports jewelry was a popular form of novelty jewelry in the 1920s.



plastic was the material ideally suited to machine production, and to the new clean cut geometric Art Deco styles. Art Deco, it has been said, was a style made for plastics. Time consuming produced pieces kept cast phenolics in the upper price brackets, well into the 1940s, when advancing technology again opened up new horizons. Plastics however, did reach the masses, usually through the dime stores. This 'novelty' jewelry was bright, cheerful and new, its strength being in its throwaway nature, rather than its craftsmanship, which was often more flimsy, through less accurate injection mouldings.

George F. Berkander in America was one of the first successful producers of plastic jewelry, producing both 'novelty' and expensive costume jewelry. He was responsible for making 'disposable' jewelry, fashionable and popular to the masses and he eventually became known for his novelty jewelry.. Berkander worked in Rhode Island as a young man, making decorative hair ornaments inspired by ivory-like celluloid vanity sets which he had seen in shop windows. He decided to design jewelry out of the same material. Anticipating changes in women's hair styles, he began to experiment with small plain bar pins, finding ways for setting pearls and rhinestones into the plastic and eventually goldplated design elements. He had a lot of difficulty at first in convincing buyers that plastic was a serious commodity, but soon his pieces were runaway sellers, at about a dollar a piece. Within a short time, the items were being bought by distributors throughout the country. According to Berkander in 1931, his company was producing inexpensive bracelets at the rate of more than a thousand gross a day, for which three tons of plastic materials were used in producing one design.

He made novelties and party goods, as well as occasional costume pieces for the wives of presidents and tiny celluloid airplanes with Lindbergh's name on them, that were ready for sale when the flyer landed in Paris in May 1927. He had discovered the commercial value of novelty jewelry and is credited for devising the first celluloid acetate flower pins which found appreciative buyers in the Fifth Avenue department



(plate 33) Airplanes were popular novelty motifs.



stores. His design staff were all graduates of art schools, whose ingenious designs were frequently copied in Paris and Japan. By the late 1920s, Berkander had several major competitors, as plastics enjoyed success on both sides of the Atlantic.

Novelty jewelry proved successful and fulfilled the 1920s taste for fantasy and escapism. Berkander, and a growing number of manufacturers, catered for a rising popularity in novelty costume jewelry and plastics. Parisian manufacturers, such as Pielfreres, also catered for plastic costume jewelry. By the late 1920s, costume jewelry had become more innovative, while becoming less like 'real' jewelry.

Chapter 3

The 1920s marked the beginning of Modernism in all areas of fashion, which included costume jewelry and the new Art Deco style. It was a time of conflicting fashion trends, where the hard geometric lines of the Art Deco style co-existed with the revival of Eastern exoticism. In the 1920s, new discoveries in the East, India and Egypt accelerated the process of archeological finds. These enormous finds, particularly the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, captured the public's imagination and longing for exoticism in their lives. The drabness of the post-war era created a perfect environment for escapism, through which the need for luxury and decadence was to flourish in every aspect of culture, but more significantly in costume jewelry.

It is impossible to fully assess the impact of exoticism on costume jewelry in the 1920s without first looking at the enormous influence of the famous Ballet Russes. On May 19th 1909, Serge Diaghilev the great Russian impresario, presented for the first time the sensational 'Ballet Russe', which was received at the Theatre des Champs Elyseés in Paris. The originality of the sets, the choreography and the dancers skill took Paris by storm. A major triumph, it not only established Russian Ballet in the forefront of contemporary art, but it proved to have a great and long lasting influence on fashion and costume jewelry. The exotic costumes and sets designed by Leon Bakst were based on traditional Indian fashions and sparkled with bold bright colours, while the sumptuous fabrics and embroideries were strung with yards of pearls and studded with brightly coloured stones. The decorative splendour of the ballet 'Scheherazade', had a immediate appeal to designers such as Worth, who in 1920, designed gowns with sleeves consisting entirely of pearls. Orientalism became the order of the day,

prompting fashion and jewelry designers into rejecting their former harmonious pastel shades of olive, grey and lavender, in favour of rich, bold and lively blocks of colour, firmly stamping the development of the Art Deco style and initiating the popularity of exoticism in the 1920s.

Fashion designers such as Ugo La Monaco and ⁹⁰Mariona Fortuny, were greatly inspired by the Orient, which held a great fascination for them. La Monaco based his collections on particular themes such as Persian tiles, Oriental rugs and Chinese ornaments. He copied Indian jewelry and created refined and elegant necklaces and bracelets in hand embroidery. Mariona Fortuny became famous for his precious original silks, rich hand painted velvets, exquisitely embroidered modern Kimono suits, and evening jackets. Other designers took his lead, and fabrics such as unusual and startlingsilk and velvet were used in unusual combinations to emphasise texture — gold and silver lamés were overlaid with cobwebs of thin metallic lace, while silks and sumptuous velvets were printed with exotic motifs, evoking the mysticism of the Orient.

This was never more apparent in fashion design than in the life and work of the great flamboyant couturier Paul Poiret. Working in Paris between 1903 and 1930, he set the precedent for others, becoming the veritable prince of patrons, commissioning young artists to work for him who were to become great artists in their own right, such as Paul Iribe and Erte.

Poiret had a deep fascination for the Orient and was said to have been 'Oriental-crazy'. His great house in Paris was covered with rich red carpets, luxurious Persian sofas and large carved Buddhas. He was a striking figure himself and paid great attention to the detail of his dress, donning loose oriental brocade jackets, tied with wide belts. Poiret introduced exoticism into the fashion world in the forms of clean-cut eastern influenced silhouettes. He dazzled the public with vibrant reds, greens, purples

and blues, displaying his creations were based on simple vertical lines, on real life tall thin models with pale faces and close cropped hair. The rich vividness of his clothes designs bordered on the lavish, tempting fashionable and wealthy women to don silver and gold cloth with crystal embroidery and gold brocade becoming beacons of colour.

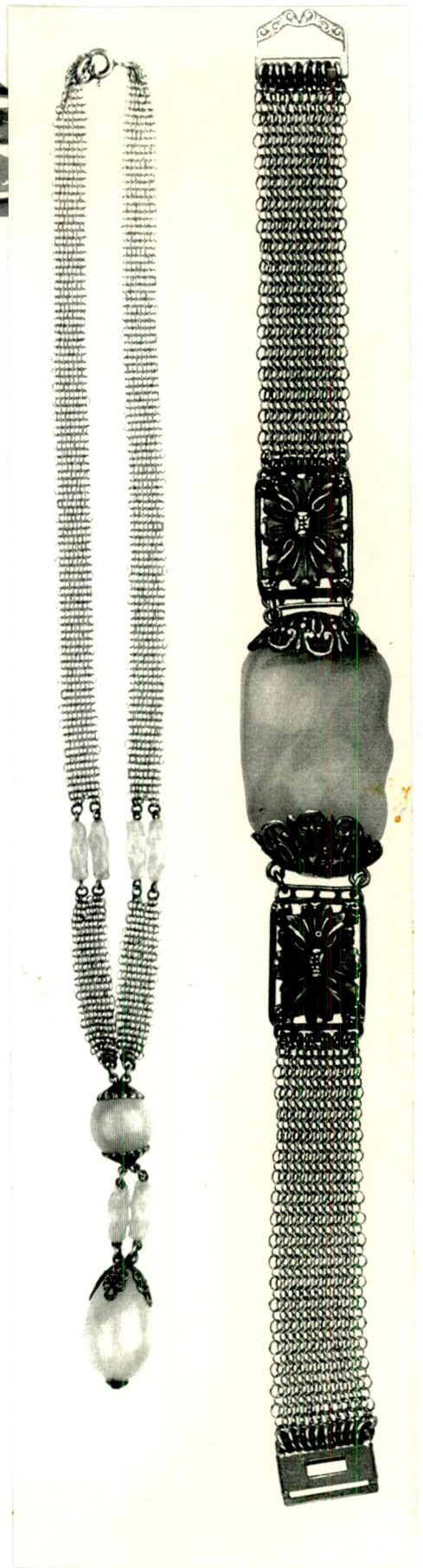
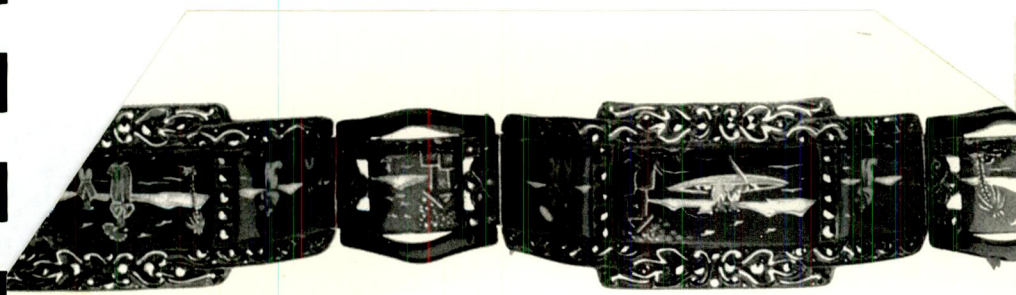
A public relations genius, Poiret gave magnificent Fetes and sumptuous fancy dress parties to publicise his new ideas about fashion and collections. One of the most magnificent and splendid celebrations Poiret gave was the '1000 and 2nd' night ball, to publicise his excitement and interest in the Orient. No expense was spared to conjure up the feeling of Oriental splendour. Persian carpets lay everywhere, pink flamingoes ran loose in the gardens, with dancing girls, slaves and monkeys in chains as the various forms of entertainment. Hundreds of guests dressed in fantastic Persian costumes including Poiret who dressed as a Sultan with feathered turban and elaborate harem trousers. The ball was a great success, and as a result, Poiret was besieged with orders for his oriental embroidered harem trousers, hooped skirts and exotic turbans in draped velvets, donned with strings of pearls. Fashionable hostesses in Paris, London and New York, were fired with copycat enthusiasm for their own Persian theme parties, and soon the fantasy of the oriental world was translated into the luxurious decadent lifestyle of the 1920's. The wealthy Avant Garde littered their incense perfumed rooms with Persian rugs and vast brocade cushions. Low Japanese tables held soft low lights and statues of Buddahs. The more daring circles of the underworld found a true opulence in the drug opium, and opium dens took on a new exotic purpose and fascination. The distinction between fashionable dress, stage costumes and costume party get- ups was faint, as more and more fashionable women donned sumptuous pyjamas and coloured stones and sequins, indiscriminate of the time of day.

Jewelry was the ideal theatrical accessory, thus fashionable wealthy women bejewelled themselves with an exotic extravagance that conjured up the spirit of the



(plate 35) The fashionable and Avante Garde collected
buddha statues and everything oriental.

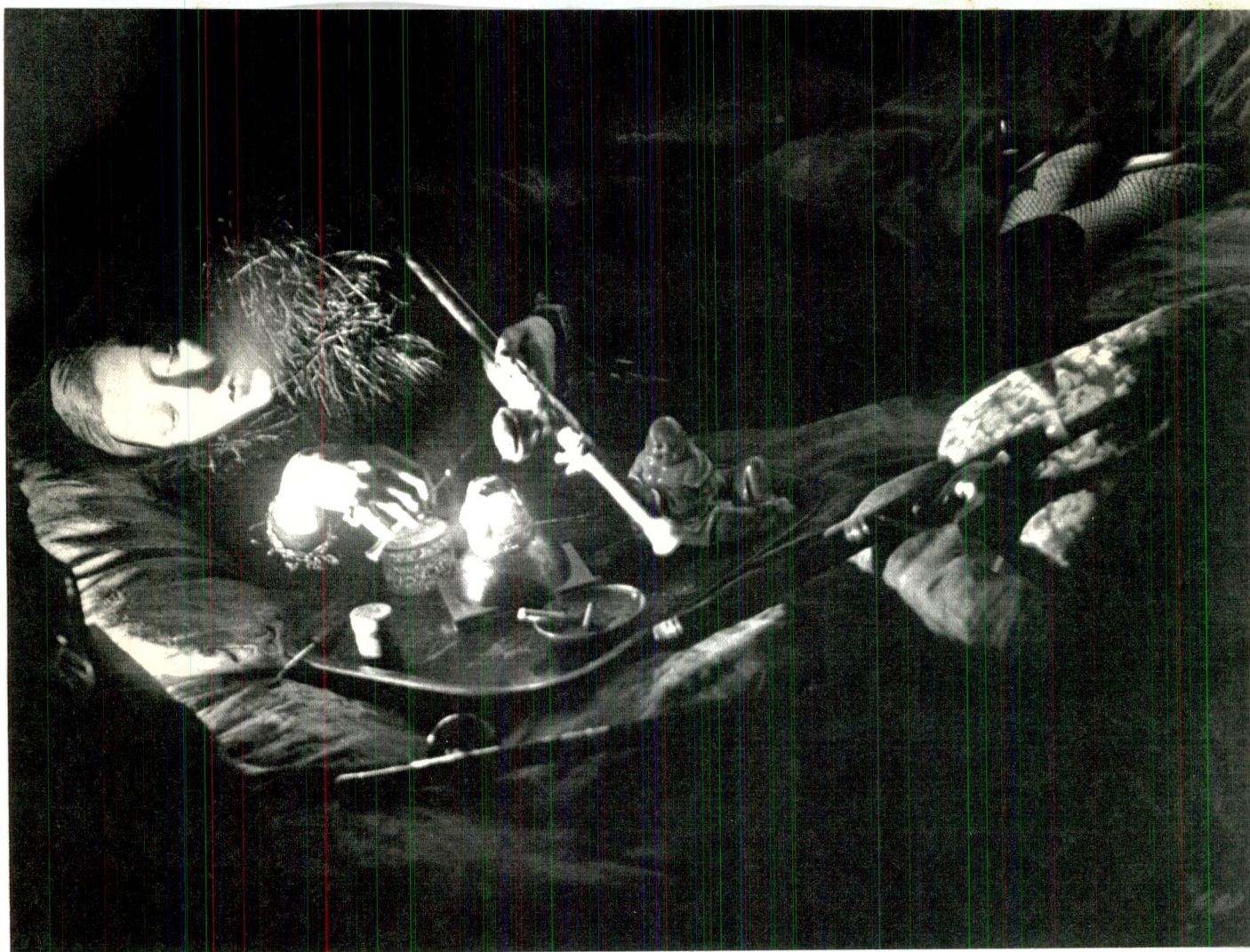




(plate 36) Necklace and bracelet of silver metal set with green glass imitation jade, with a black metal bracelet. (above) enamels with chinese figures.

Orient. Enormous emerald pendants and elaborate lengthy earrings were popular, while enormous stones glittered like bright Persian stars. Indian inspired jewelry was popular, and the Cartier jewelry firm offered a lavish collection. Jacques Cartier himself, travelled to the Persian Gulf in search of stones and inspiration, resulting in items of the most sumptuous splendour. Bracelets, brooches and clips were colourful pieces displaying a succession of exotic fruit and flowers.

The majority of women could not afford such decadence, thus costume jewelry offered the excitement and glamour they could not afford. Eastern influences appeared everywhere in costume jewelry. Jewellers admired and copied the Japanese and Chinese ethnic jewelry that became available in Paris in 1923 . They also mixed Oriental styles and motifs, for instance a typically Oriental carved green-glass emerald would be set in a piece of romantic jewelry, such as a flower or fruit basket setting. Costume jewelry was greatly influenced by the new overwhelming colours of greens, blues, reds and yellows, which were put together in revolutionary ways; blue glass gems were paired with green stones, amethysts with blue or green enamels and coral with black onyx or enamel. In 1925 at the Paris Palais Galiera exhibition, the trendsetting of precious jewelry was made up of the very Oriental colour trio, of green, black and white in emeralds, onyx, diamonds. Costume jewellers inspired by this use of strong contrasts, substituted these precious stones with jade, laquers, glass and enamels and synthetic resins, such as bakelite, with amazing results. Indian and precious gemstones, along with enamel work, inspired the use of lapis, turquoise, sharp orange, yellow, sapphire blue, amethyst, violet, deep coral and laquer red. Cool neutral stones such as clear glass, and rock crystal were set with these flamboyant colour combinations. Black was a favoured colour that evoked the Orient, thus it was incorporated into enamels, glass and beads as a strong background to the bright reds and blues. New techniques in stone-cutting affected the integration of colour into precious and costume jewelry alike,



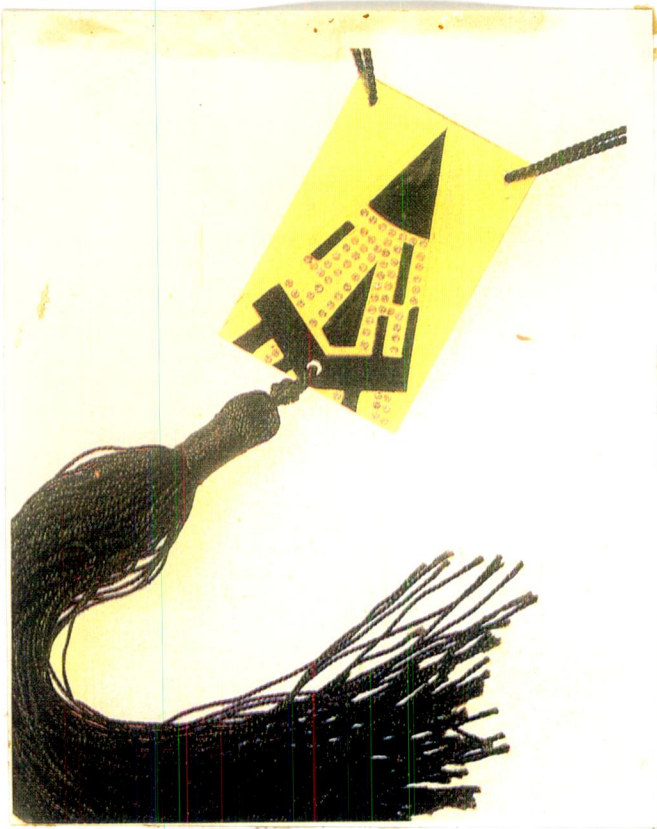
(plate 37) Many people in the 20s experimented with the drug opium to experience the 'spirit' of the orient.



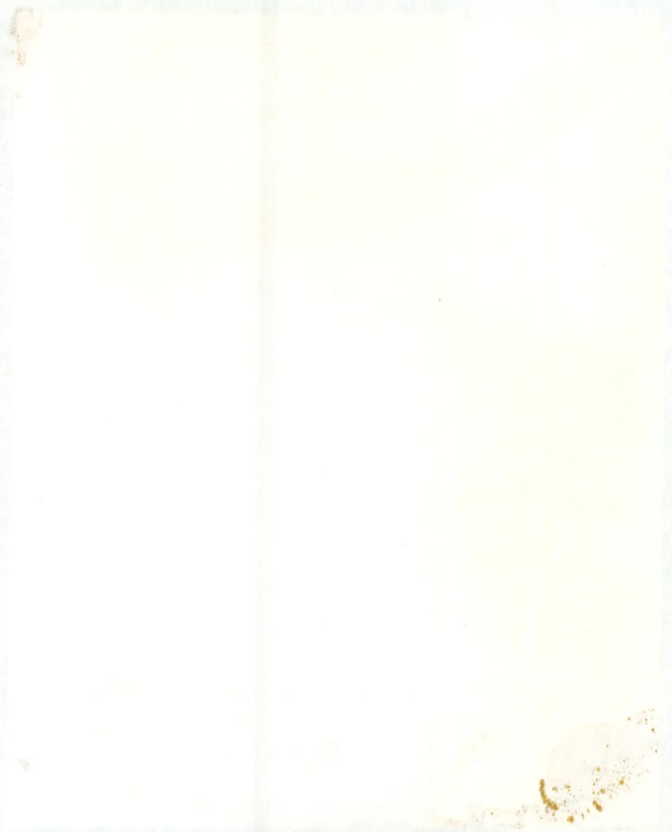
prompting new calibre stones (i.e. stones cut in various shapes to create a design), to provide colour borders that were once created by lines of enamel. Indian calligraphy and its symbols, such as the symbol of the Garden of Eden, decorated pendants and was etched into beads of glass and wood. Stones were also carved and etched, stones in ruby and emerald green being directly inspired by India. Oblong and round stones were etched with lengthwise stripes, called the 'melon cut'. Costume jewelers in the 1920s used this distinctive cut to melonise glass, crystal, metal, wood and pearl beads.

Exotic materials such as ivory, jade, horn and bone came from China and Japan and were imitated profusely in costume jewellery in realistic composition plastics, glass and resins in blazing colours, that were just as dazzling as the natural materials. Oriental motifs were popular in costume jewellery, and pendants of coloured glass, plastic and imitation tortoise-shell were moulded and carved into the shapes of Buddhas, dragons, cranes and calligraphy. Costume jewelers took liberties with Oriental motifs and mixed styles in combinations that not necessarily resembled the original ethnic models, but most definitely celebrated the spirit of the East. Oriental lucky charms and souvenirs were threaded on silk ropes and bracelets. 'Pi', pierced disks were carved with authentic looking calligraphy and were strung in long silk chords as necklaces or bracelets, they were ancient symbols of the heavens and held oriental mysticism. Jade was the embodiment of the Orient and was carved in white or green galalith or bakelite resembling jade with simple carved lines and was then threaded in silken cords. Imitation jade was also carved into lucky charms of exotic animals which were popular with the jetset at Monte Carlo. In 1923, the theme was China at the Paris Opera Ball and the Buddha motif was everywhere to be seen in costume jewelry. Jade, amber, plastic and glass Buddha's were threaded on silk neck cords or bracelets ending in silk tassels.

The tassel became a popular decorative element of the 1920s. Tassels were popular



(plate 38) Tassels were highly popular motifs in the '20s'.



in the 1800's as bow-knots and were worn belt-style around the waist. From India came the tasselled turban ornament of pearls and beads. In the 20's the dangling drop of tassels became the 'number one motif'. The tassel and its thousand variations were draped across shoulders and used as pendants as well as earrings and necklaces. In 1921, *Vogue* enthused, "One out of every three women seen in the Parc or the Bois, lunching at the Ritz or dancing at the Ambassador wore earrings an inch or two in length" (Becker, V, 1988, p.120). Paul Poiret was mainly responsible for introducing the tassel to the fashion world in Paris. He accessorised his clothes with silk-tasselled sashes decorated with glass beads, metal Buddhas and Chinese mandarins. The materials he used were authentically Oriental and he was fond of using amber and coloured vegetable beads, with long fringes of oblong pearls suspended on silk cords which complemented the eastern mode of dress. As the 'Oriental past' craze died down by 1929, the tassel was still fashionably suited to the swaying drapery of the new gowns in the 1930's.

For a time orientalism found a rival in a developing interest in the new Egyptian style. The discovery by Lord Carnarvon on the 29th of November 1922 of the tomb of Tutankhamun with its priceless treasures aroused an interest which was not confined to archeological circles. The sheer quantity and richness of the gold coffins immediately appealed to the general public. The furniture and personal belongings of the 'boy king', who had reigned for about six years over three thousand years ago, had escaped tomb robbers. This was largely due to the fact that by ancient Egyptian standards, it was a small treasure and the 'boy king' insignificant. The treasures that spanned the centuries, were more tangible to modern westerners than the shrivelled and painted mummies of subsequent Pharaohs, which was what most people had associated with ancient Egypt. It recreated a whole ancient world with objects of unimaginable splendour. For a time, the beautiful baroque objects, elegant to the point of decadence, were a source of



(plate 39) The discovery of Tutankhamen's Tomb in Luxor,
Egypt, in 1992.

inspiration to designers, as photographs of the discoveries made in the course of clearing the tomb appeared in periodicals and newspapers . Erroneous rumours spurred by the death of Lord Carnarvon,(due to a mosquito bite), were to grow, and seemed to prove the legend of 'The curse of the Pharaohs', which added to the mysticism of the discovery and fired the public's imagination.

Egyptianism instantly became a huge craze, as 'fashion's hand' put Egypt's motifs - hieroglyphics, scarabs and pyramids, onto a thousand elegant objects, such as vanity sets, match boxes, ashtrays and wallpaper. Today, these are highly sought after collectable items. In Bond Street, London fashionable high-street shops sold handbags covered with hieroglyphics, while Huntly & Palmer of London sold biscuits in tins shaped like Tutankhamun's wine jar. Perfumes adopted exotic titles such as 'Nuit d'Egypt'. In Paris, poet and fashion writer Jean Cocteau commented on this 'Tutmania': "Women wish to be transformed into Egyptian dancing girls, silk and fur furniture covers, lampshades, cushions in the harem of the sultan *a la mode*".(All That Glitters, Jody Shields). While the stylish *femme fatale* dreamt of herself as a slave girl concubine and queen of the Nile, fashionable clothing also adopted Egyptian themes. Tiered skirts and pleating were favoured by *Vogue* in 1923: "Pleating was never better and that's Egyptian." (Shields,J.,1987, p.340.) Women resembled Cleopatras, donning suntans and brown face powder while pencilling their eyes into almond shapes with black Kohl pencils.

Nothing took to the 'Egyptian look' more noticeably than jewelry. As most of the finds at the tomb were the most sumptuous Egyptian jewelry pieces ever seen, the excellent craftsmanship and the elaborate designs directly inspired both costume and precious jewellers to imitate the greatest Egyptian innovations. As early as 1923, the American costume Jewelry company, Napier, announced it's jewelry collection in 'The Spirit of Ancient Egypt'. It was a sumptuous collection of stunning necklaces,



(plate 40) A collection of Egyptian inspired jewelry, in silver, gilt, glass and enamel. c. 1925.



(plate 41) Egyptian style hat of 1923.



brooches, bracelets and earrings, in strong vivid colours and designs, evoking the splendour of Tutankhamun's jewels.

Fine jewelry inspired by Egypt, did not follow the bright colours of the Egyptian palette as far as costume jewelry did, possibly due to the sheer expense of the materials used by the Egyptian jewellers. The Egyptians were not inhibited in their use of gold and precious stones due to the abundance of natural resources, whereas, modern western jewellers found that they must accommodate their imaginations. Costume jewellers in the 1920s did not encounter this problem. Due to the vast range of colours in glass stones and the inexpensiveness of non-precious materials, they did not hesitate in imitating turquoise, lapis, pink quartz, jade and black onyx in glass or resins. Costume jewellers did not aim at authenticity but instead translated the mystical and symbolic grandeur with a somewhat indiscriminate but effective display of stylised motifs, such as scarabs, hieroglyphics and winged falcons. Jewellers copied original inlays as bright enamels and interpreted the rich gold as silver gilt or gilt metal calling it 'Nile gold'. The results looked even more authentic than the real thing. 'Egyptian inspired' costume jewelry was daring and delicate, made of many lengths of gold-plate chain, and amulets with many brightly coloured beads. Lapis or its resin substitute, was covered with 'pseudo' Egyptian religious and symbolic figures, while carefully made and designed jewels, often including the translucent *plique à jour* enamel, were excellently applied onto scarab's wings or vulture's backs.

The mummy, the sphinx, the scarab, the jackal-headed god and the pharaoh, were all popular design elements and were seen in items such as pendants, bracelets, brooches earrings and even buttons. Hieroglyphics or wall paintings, and the geometry of the pyramids were translated into patterns for slim rectangular brooches, bordered with rhinestones, or flexible bracelets and earrings. The cobra and the asp were popular motifs for slinky gold metallic snake chains, which coiled around the wrist or throat,



(plate 42) A design for an Egyptian revival bracelet set with diamanté and coloured paste motifs, with a mummy style glass necklace.



invoking the romantic legend of Cleopatra and Anthony. The chain, with or without the snake's head, which had always been associated with Egypt, was occasionally set with vibrant stones or beads. In Autumn 1926, cobra jewelry was all the rage, and Napier's versions were flexible and slinky with a gold- green finish. Cobra necklaces, with or without fake gems, coiled around the neck and the head - clasping the body so that the tail hung down over the neckline. The snake chain, sleek and dramatically simple, became one of the timeless and fashionable jewellery motifs of the 1920s.

It is not surprising, that the massive jewelled Egyptian collar was not included in this revival. The collar was, perhaps, too heavy and too wide and thus did not compliment the fragile fabrics of 1920s clothing. Often the popular Oriental style was combined with the new Egyptian images resulting in Egyptian style necklaces sporting a floppy oriental tassel, while egyptian style amulets were also often strung on oriental silken-cords and ribbons. Both necklaces and earrings were long and dangling. Scarabee or 'slave bracelets', offered the fantasy and primitive exoticism of the desert. Scarabee bracelets were popular, using the form of the scarabee beetles in glass or plastics imitating non-precious stones. The back of the scarab was highlighted and etched in the shapes of wings and hieroglyphics. These were then joined together by golden links into a flexible bracelet. The 'slave 'bracelet gained enormous popularity, when the actor Rudolph Valentino was seen wearing one off-screen. This simple circlet of oval links became a nationally best-selling jewelry item in America and inspired women to wear bracelets above their elbows 'slave style'. Movie stars like Valentino and Gloria Swanson held undisputed sway over fashion in Europe and America, due to the powerful impact of cinema on peoples lives in the 1920s. As theatre and opera was reserved for the wealthy, and television was unheard of, cinema became the sole entertainment of the masses. The cinema brought a magical escape, and an entirely new entertainment and fantasy into people's lives, while for some it stood for the hope of

Costume Accessories Are Important

By *Helen Williams Vance*

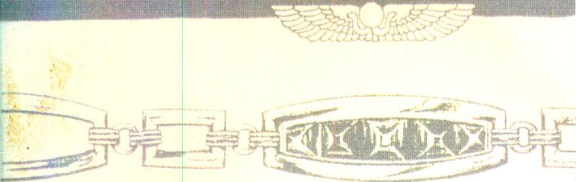
Written and Illustrated Especially for the Globe-Democrat




(plate 43) 'Women's Wear Daily' cutting of October 1926, showing copies of popular cobra necklace and slave link bangles.




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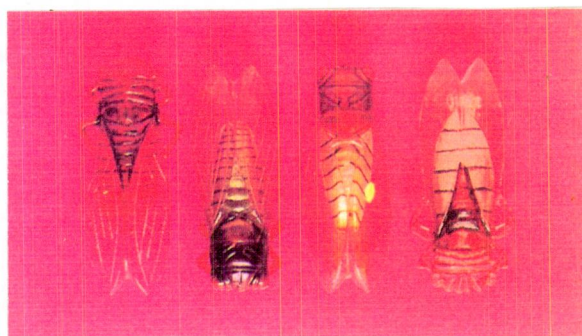
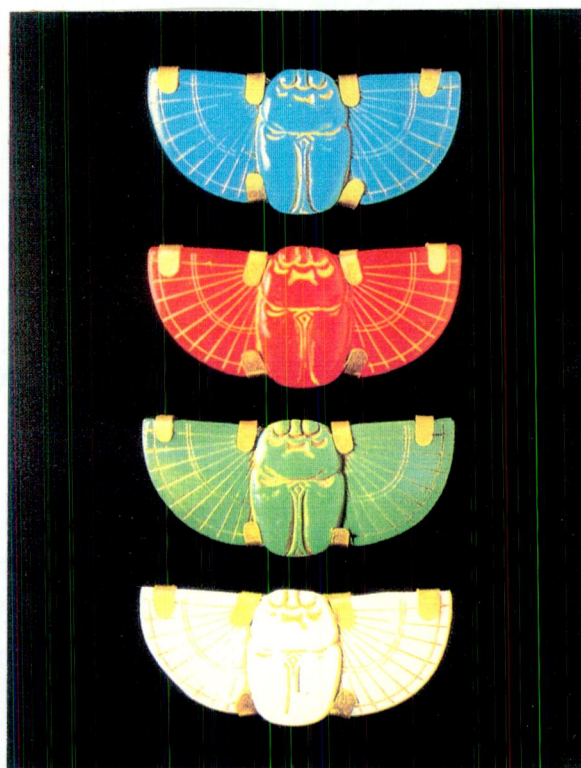
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(plate 44) Slave bracelets were the emblem of chic. The assorted scarab bracelets (right) are metal and composition plastic.

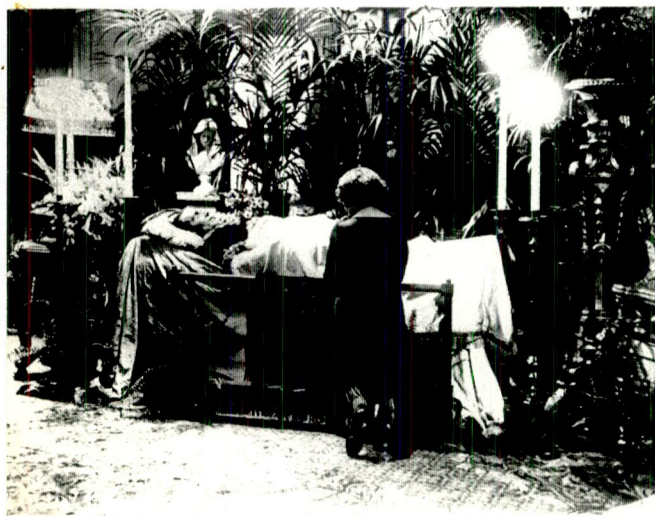
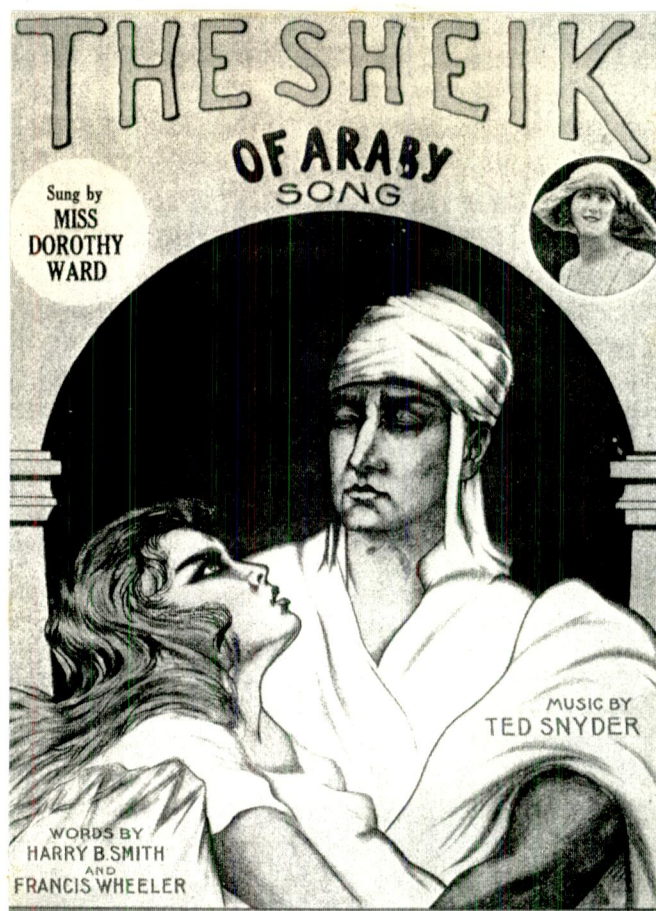


(plate 45) Plastic scarab brooches with cobra inspired bracelet.

stardom. Hollywood embraced the new Egyptian style, resulting in the most lavish sets that transported the romance of the East into the decor of the cinema, creating an atmosphere of another world.³

Hollywood's power over fashion and costume jewelry can not be over-emphasised. Notable at this time, was a series of spectacular films, with highly-jewelled costumes – 'Salome', 'Samson and Delilah' and 'Cleopatra'. These films prompted women's taste for exotic and abundant costume jewelry. By the early 1920s, Hollywood stars began not only to assemble, but to flaunt, their own personal jewelry collections, as publicity moved to enhance their star credibility. The sheer richness of their collections – particularly Gloria Swanson's and Pola Negri's – most certainly prompted women to follow their lead with their own glamorous costume jewelry collections. Theda Bara, leading female star of 'Cleopatra', with her exotic looks and *femme fatale* roles, was the subject of fascination for many fans. Her name was an anagram meaning 'arab death', and her astrological signs were those of Cleopatra. Her exotic appeal went beyond the boundaries of the silver screen. Theda Bara's costumes for 'Cleopatra', were daring for the time and oozed sensuality. Her diadem, a Pharaoh cobra symbol and her scanty serpent bra, composed of coiled metal snakes with synthetic jewelled heads and heavy rectangular linked straps. These certainly contributed to the fashion for cobra jewelry in the 1920s. Gloria Swanson was the public's glamour queen and her costumes designed by Paul Iribe were lavish to the extreme. Swanson played a Babylonian princess in 'Male and Female' in 1919. She wore a masterpiece in costume design, made entirely of imitation pearls that led many women to add 'faux' pearls to authentic necklaces, to

³The Grange cinema in Kilburn, north London, was a relic to ancient Egypt, evoking and mirroring the fantasy world of cinema itself. In Sale, Cheshire, the Odeon Cinema was shaped from the temple of Karnak, with a Pharaoh-head decorating the organ. The style reached an aesthetic climax at the Astoria Theatre, Streatham, where the ladies' restroom boasted a colourful relief mural of an Egyptian female figure bathing in a lotus-filled pool. However, this trend could be traced to Hollywood and Sid Grauman's Egyptian Theatre – designed before the actual opening of Tutankhamun's tomb.



(plate 46) Rudolph Valentino appeared in 'The Sheik' in 1921 and became a movie star legend. (below) Many women visited Valentino's body in the Campbell Funeral Parlour, New York.





(plate 47) (left) Gloria Swanson wearing Iribé's elaborate costume in 'Male and Female' 1919. (right) Theda Bara's sensual outfit for 'Cleopatra'



improve the length, to purchase rows and rows of imitation pearls to appear wealthy and exotic.

Another successful costume designer in Hollywood was a Russian emigré, Natasha Rambova who created the romance of the East in her film, 'Salome', in 1922. However, her artistic connection and later her marriage to the actor Rudolph Valentino, created the greatest public interest. Valentino was the greatest lover on the screen in the 1920s. His exotic dark looks and swashbuckling roles, made him an international heart-throb. His appearance in 'The Sheik' in 1921, prompted American girls to call their boyfriend's 'shieks' and flirting became known as 'shieking'.

Cinema marked another trend in costume jewelry. In 1921, Valentino danced the tango divinely in the 'Four Horseman of the Apocalypse', and recreated a world of lust and passion that held a fascination for many female cinema goers. Originally the tango was introduced as early as 1915, and was seen as daring, sensuous and earthy. Fashion and costume jewelry pounced on it, and it soon became the slang word for feeling upbeat. While the demure suit might have been fine for daywear, tango dressing was the look for the evening. Women wore black Spanish lace, vibrant reds and tango orange. Towering hair combs made of tortoise shells or plastic studded with rhinestones were worn with profusion. The jewelry to match this exotic image, was intricate lacy filigree metal, usually gold coloured with a dull antique tone, and set with flat square cut slabs of yellow glass 'topaz'. This honey-coloured stone was to remain a 1920s favourite evoking the passion and exoticism of the Argentinian sierras.

The American Coro Company, created glass topaz jewelry, often mixing the topaz colour with Japanese inspired emeralds, citrines and yellow stones or glass. Along with topaz, jet was another material considered suitably latin, while glass, bakelite or plastic resin substitutes were popular. Earrings for the tango consisted of dangling circular hoops or pendants quivering with tiny metal beads. The 1920s was an exciting time for



(plate 48) (left) A set of 'spanish' jewelry by Napier made with antique looking gold metal.



(plate 49) (right) Exotic latin hair combs were popular accessories for 'Tango Dressing'.



discoveries and costume jewelry motifs were derived from many other exotic sources. From excavations in Mexico and Guatamala, the Mayan and Aztec Indians gave costume and fine jewelry the repetitious rhythmic pattern sources that were associated with Art Deco. 1920s costume jewelry was noticeably inspired by AztecIndian sources. Many vivid colours were borrowed from the Indians palette, delicate tints of green, yellow, silver and pink gold. Novelty jewelry also profited from Indian art and prompted grotesque ornaments of jaguars , lizards and vulture's in sStone carvings. This grotesque style was later to become a popular feature in costume jewelry. It originated fromthe African art souvenir jewelry of Egypt and eastern sources.

After the First World War, along with the Charleston and Tango, Parisians – particularly women – discovered the Ball Negre in the Rue Blomet. The passion for all things African reached its peak in about 1925, with the arrival in France of the American Negro dance company, and the resounding success of Josephine Baker. As though the carnage of the War had inspired a sudden sexual frenzy, white women were irresistably drawn to this sensual music and forms of dance. They searched out the nightclubs, which throbbed to the beat of jazz music, where couples gyrated as if to some voodoo rite. The 1920's saw a deep interest in African art. Artists such as Picasso and Braque made use of African motifs in their work, and were particularly interested in African sculpture, which like their own work was not realistic in the manner that had been so dominant in Euporean art. In1921, an exhibition at Marseilles of French primitive art, proved influential. Earlier still, African sculpture was shown for the first time in smaller Paris galleries. Congo art and gargantuan jewelry became popular. Picasso and Modigliani collected African art and gave it a fashionable cachet amongst *avant garde* circles in Paris. African art greatly influenced other designers, such as Schiaparelli, who genuinely admired and respected african art. In 1928, she was designing knitted sweaters which featured her own version of Congolese art motifs.

Other designers were more indirectly influenced using watered down versions of cubist black and beige prints. By 1927 the incorporation of primitive african motifs into fashion design marked a new style in costume jewelry. Barbarism as it came to be known, as its title suggests was crude and boldly oversized, usually made from primitive raw materials such as, wood and shells. A jewelry publication observed in 1928: "Barbaric jewelry shows the rush back to the natural, an avoidance of the artificial so characteristic of war fashions" (Shields, J., 1987, p.43.).

Barbarism rejected the clean perfected lines of Art Deco, instead representing a new concept in jewelry that was natural rough and anti-precious. Given the 1920s taste for the exotic, the extravagant and the outlandish, barbaric jewelry's popularity was inevitable. Women became daring in a new way of wearing their savage jewelry like fearless Amazons. Barbaric jewelry had a crude, ill-mannered look to it, and appeared as if it could have been made by a child. It's innocence and rawness was perhaps it's strongest statement. Barbaric jewels were mostly over-sized and made from natural materials, such as wood, cork, leather, nuts, seeds and feathers. Precious materials such as ivory, coral and turquoise were copied in composition plastics and used in a natural rough state. Often appearing as 'rocks', rough gems of all kinds were sometimes strung together on elephant hair in a carefree, innocent manner. Metal was also used in nugget forms and then strung simply onto bracelets, or made into one-piece cuffs.

In the late 1920s Egyptian influences heralded a new reign as primitive souvenirs, such as strange amulets and chunky odd mummy shaped beads that had a more authentic old look than the bright dazzling turquoise and glass beads of previous styles. Precious materials such as amber, turquoise and ivory were imitated in plastic in different natural styles often appearing as chunky bracelets strung together by elephant hairs. Slave bracelets reminiscent of the Egyptian style consisted of squares of flattened beaten gold and looked complimentary with satin gowns. Brown, as a colour, became

the toast of fashion and costume jewelry in 1927, and was the 'in colour' for fabrics, shoes, hats, and of course costume jewelry.

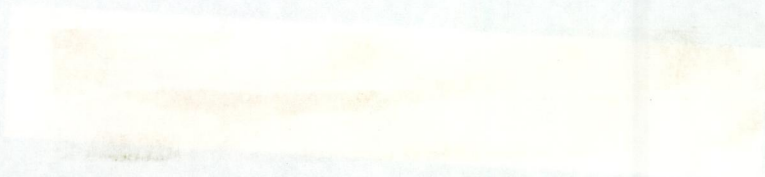
Topaz, amber and their imitations, were the pride of the couturiers. They were credited with creating their own line of subdued jewelry, which left fine jewellers who were so accustomed to the arctic splendour of diamonds, at a loss. Wood combined ideally with brown the fashion colour choice and lent itself to the barbaric look. Wood as material, was easily carved, gilded and coloured. Exotic names, such as snake wood, african onyx wood and amethyst wood, were seen in beads and bracelets. Wood was also combined with other materials like crystal beads, jade, or glass. In 1929, Lucien Lelong's collection of wooden necklaces were beaming colours of green, red, beige, in multiple shapes of oblong square or round beads separated with rhinestones. Just as the materials evoked simpler savage times past, so was its scale. Massive pieces replaced the former decorative motifs. Beads were as big as eggs, and bracelets consisted of wide bands of metal encircling the wrist like a shield, in fact, size was no object. This clumsy prehistoric look inspired Elsa Schiaparelli to create her own collection of bulky cuff bracelets. Her bold cuffs of ivory and ebony strung on elastic were to be worn around the wrist or ankle.

Other costume jewellers created bracelets of flat plaques of wood plain or carved and joined by metal links. Metal used in the barbaric style was usually gold coloured and rough finished. In 1926 the American Napier Co. created the 'Viking' collection which featured simple jewelry of coiled links. Metal was often pounded into spearheads primitive coins and teeth. The more lady-like alternative was the savage tooth necklace, produced in various materials, which were of a rough, jagged appearance.

Barbaric jewelry was not an easy style to enjoy for some women. Not all women had the daring and rebellious qualities of Nancy Cunard, who habitually wore armloads of barbaric ivory bracelets, maybe because barbarism, more so than cruder barbarism,



(plate 50) Nancy Cunard wearing her signature arm load of ivory bangles, in the barbaric style.

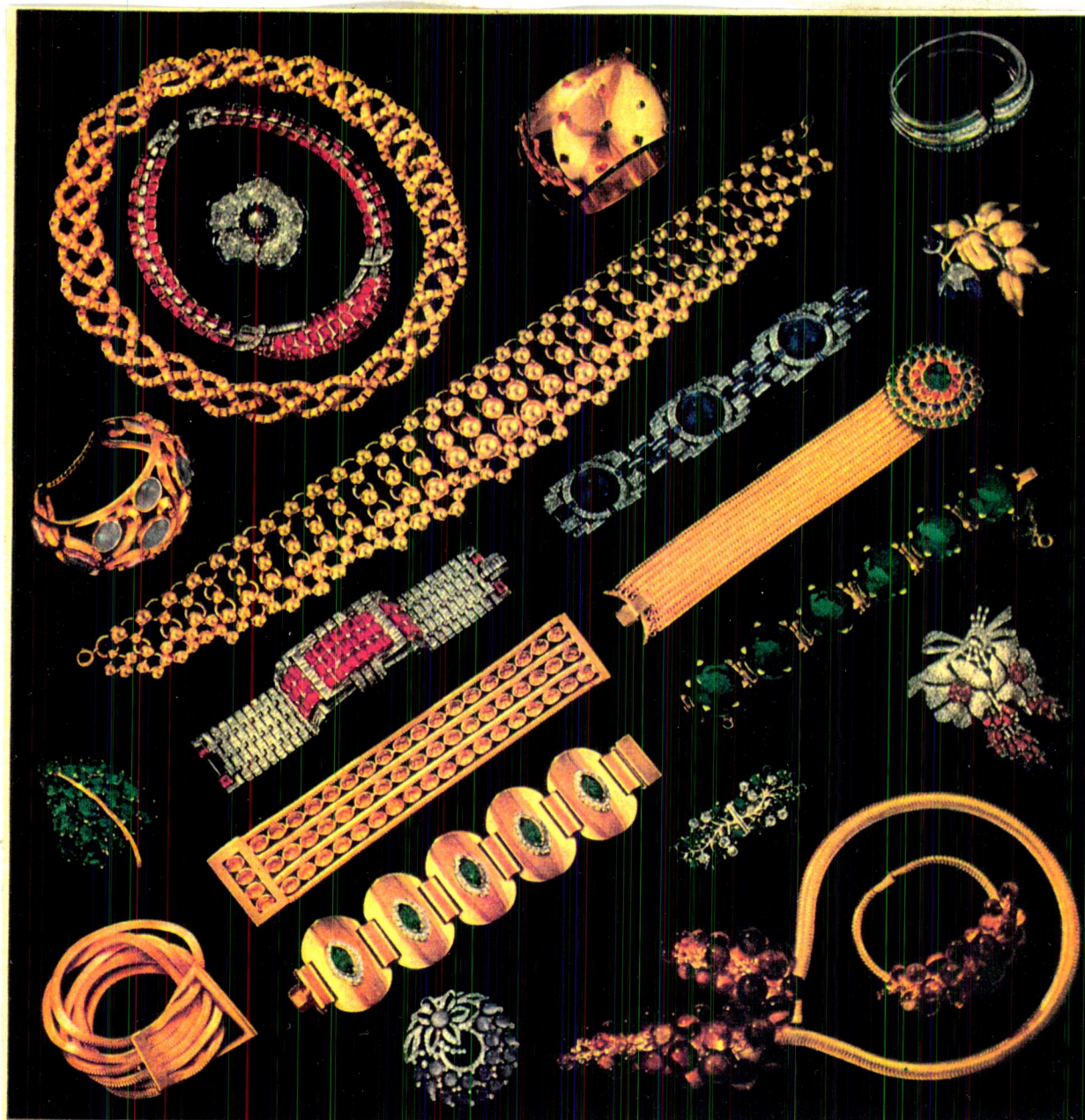


owed very little to the western conventional representation of reality. Barbaric and exotically influenced jewelry, encouraged designers to widen their spectrum of colours and their use of non-precious materials, providing women with a varied choice of costume jewelry. Barbarism, like Cubism, opened up a new world outside Western conventions and brought a whole new exciting concept of non-western arts into every woman's life, in the form of costume jewelry that may not have had the daring of real African jewelry, but was certainly worn with a free spirit. Barbaric costume jewelry is still revived today in the great fashion house of Yves Saint Laurent.

Conclusion

On the surface, it is not difficult to see why the influences of the 1920s were to have such far-reaching effects. In reality, there were various separate influences, which were to inter-relate and produce costume jewelry as we know it today. The most important advance to emerge from this decade, was technological changes and mass-manufacturing techniques, which resulted in the revolutionary new medium of plastic. These techniques combined with the ancient traditions and skills of designers and craftsmen, thus creating a whole new market for that product in the form of costume jewelry. The exciting and radical changes which were occurring in the economy and society, resulted in a new breed of consumers, the most important being working women. These emancipated women, were hungry for change and the allure of fashion was just right for them to metamorphosise and develop their individuality.

The change in lifestyles was reflected in the emerging decorative styles of the 1920s, such as Art Deco and Barbarism. The former being simpler and ideally suited to mass-production, while Barbarism explored the crudeness of African jewelry and the potential of natural materials, offering instead, an alternative to the clean, modernist Art Deco style in the forms of earthy, primitive costume jewelry. Women were able to buy the latest fashions at affordable prices, adding to their independence. A woman could choose her own look, whether glamorous or avant garde. The new plastic was the perfect medium for this function. The famous fashion designers such as Chanel and Schiaparelli, adopted plastic as one of the mediums for their designs, thus setting an



JUNK JEWELRY: A FLASHY FAD FOR SIMPLE STYLES

The twenty-one sparkling trinkets in this photograph are the pick of the 1937-38 winter crop of what the trade, with neither malice nor shame, likes to call "junk jewelry." During the past year sales of "junk" reached new highs. In the boom days of 1929 dollar sales may have been greater, but never have as many pieces been sold or worn as during the current season.

Jewelry manufacturers thrive when dress fashions are simple. Last August, at the Paris Openings, wise ornament merchants whooped with joy at the dresses with plain high necklines or V-shaped *décolletages* with short sleeves, and generally without fancy buttons, elaborate collars and frills. Schiaparelli and Chanel called several of their creations "jewelry dresses." The mannequins modeling them were bowed with the weight of the jewelry they wore. Cameras clicked, cables carried the news to the U. S. and the stampede was on.

By November, leading American department stores had doubled space devoted

to junk jewelry. Fashionable shops on 57th Street, New York, and comparably exclusive stores over the country which had never stocked "junk" before, succumbed

All jewelry made of nonprecious metals (except silver) and stones is called "junk." A decade ago "fake" was the qualifying term. Then the aim was to make the imitation look real. Several years later the more polite phrase "costume jewelry" was adopted. Last year when heavy gilt jewelry became so popular, the trade aptly labeled all nonprecious jewelry "junk." No attempt is made to fool anyone into believing it is real. The six clear, perfectly matched pieces of glass in the bracelet (*centre right, above*) obviously couldn't be emeralds.

"Junk" can be expensive. The rhinestone and simulated emerald bracelet (*top right*) costs \$100. The ruby and rhinestone necklace (*inner circle, top*) costs \$75. Biggest sales of "junk" are for pieces from \$5 to \$10. The least expensive item in the collection above is the gold and emerald spray (*lower left*) which costs \$8.



accepted trend for plastic as the way forward for modern jewelry. Although the glamour and extravagance of the 1920s gave way to the Depression and increasing economic hardship, the 1930s witnessed an even higher degree of artistic daring and technical advancements. The Depression had conflicting effects on the costume jewelry trade. On the one hand, less women were able to afford expensive jewelry, therefore, they turned to the cheaper alternatives, which led to the success of the costume jewelry trade. On the other hand, women who could afford expensive jewelry, rejected experimental non-precious jewelry in favour of more conservative fine jewels, which were seen as a form of investment and a reaffirmation of wealth in a time of financial difficulties.

The 1930s was a time of great advancements in manufacturing and design. Many of the fine jewelry houses began producing costume jewelry due to the Depression. This resulted in a closer relationship between mass-manufacturers and fine-jewellers. Higher standards of workmanship followed, and an higher degree of artistic daring in costume jewelry designs. In 1931, Dadaist and Surrealist jewelry were making strong visual statements produced in the new acrylics. This marked an age in costume jewelry that was to flourish and expand.

From our perspective today, it is very hard to imagine a limited range of semi-precious and precious jewelry being our only choices of adornment. The revolutionary changes that began in the 1920s, did not end there. Instead the technology proved to be so successful in targeting all areas of the mass market, that creations of all kinds, from body sculpture to designer fashion jewelry, were to continue with ever increasing success. We may look back on the 1920s with an inquistive nostalgia, coveting such "quaint" creations, but this in itself defeats the spirit of costume jewelry which was always geared towards modernism and the fashions of the day. Costume jewelry of the 1920s was not supposed to be a collector's items, merely to be worn with the every changing whim of fashion.



(plate 52) The essential Chanel accessories for the woman of the eighties.

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