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Introduction

In this thesis I intend to look at the interplay between society and design, using Depression era jewellery and accessories as my case studies. The Depression seems to have engendered two different outlooks on almost every subject in American life, and the aim of this thesis is to show how these various ideological dichotomies were reflected in the design of this era.

To begin with I will give a general outline of various debates related to the broader aspects of this topic — aesthetics and society, culture as a method of class differentiation, the perceived differences between art, craft and design, and the place of design in society.

I will then look in more detail at the social context of the 1930s in America, outlining the prevailing currents of thought among designers, academics, and the general public. With regards to the general reaction to the Depression, and a possible solution to it, the two main currents of thought were a longing for security, represented by historicism, and a belief in change for the better, a looking to the future. At the same time there was a similar tug-of-war in the American attitude to European influences, with nationalism and isolationism in conflict with the old idea of Europe representing class and culture. Class, race and gender issues will also be discussed in this section, as will the general design background in America at the time, with particular reference to the influence of the media in this area.

Having established the theoretical and historical setting for the objects, I will examine them with reference to these issues. New, practical aspects of life in the Depression will also be brought up in this section, such as considerations of economy, the new commercialism, new materials, and the desire for individuality of the ordinary people. Cosmetics and varied packaging will be discussed; streamlining and the machine aesthetic; machine production; the use of diamonds, real or imitation; historical jewellery; and the American narrative tradition.

In conclusion I intend to summarise the nature of the relationship between society and design in this period.

Chapter One

Design and society

In spite of the apparently innocuous nature of design as something meant for consumption by ordinary people, in order for it to evolve and improve it must be continually re-assessed and judged. This necessitates a body of critics who will confer value on certain designs and relegate others to obscurity. The designs which are honoured with recognition by the elders of society will not only become part of the canon, but will also acquire monetary value beyond their intrinsic worth. While this process has been ongoing in the art world for centuries, in the design world it is far more recent.

Brighton shows how this process has become an important part of international diplomacy: "If the status conferred by one national art world is confirmed by the upper echelons of another, this is particularly important for it authenticates not just the value of the particular artist, but the value-conferring of the art world whence he came." (Brighton, 1977, p 42) Wolff specifies that this "non-innocent" nature of art criticism is the product of "the social history of groups, power relations, institutions and established practices and conventions." (Wolff, 1983, p 15/16) Thus a work of art (or design) which has become part of the canon has not necessarily been elevated to this position because of any inherent aesthetic value, but rather because of the perceived value at the time when it was assessed. In the case of a historical design which is being assessed at a later date, the value conferred on it depends not only on the context within which it is judged, but also on the current perception of the context within which it was made. I am very aware that in researching this thesis, I have only had access to work which has been validated by someone else, as only these works have been preserved, in books and collections.

One of the important ideological aspects of a work of art is its ability (or its deliberate refusal) to function as a symbol of class distinction, if displayed, on sale, within the gallery system. This connection of art with class, and the appropriation of the concept of "culture" by the dominant class, must not be neglected.

The concept of 'culture' as we know it today dates from the mid-nineteenth century. It came to signify not only intellectual development in society, and the body of the arts, but also a whole way of life — intellectual, material, and spiritual (Williams, 1961, p 16/17). Williams sees this new phenomenon as a "complex and radical response to the new problems of social class". Bourdieu takes this to the next level, showing dominant Western theories of art reinforcing class divisions in society — "cultural capital" is an asset held by the dominant class, to differentiate them from the dominated mass (Wolff, 1983, p 36). Thus culture becomes a weapon in the power struggle between the classes, and so aesthetic evaluations and criticism become functions of the class in power, who will most likely ensure that the canon is an affirmative one, in

order to maintain this position of power. Wolff concurs that all aesthetic judgements are "class-based, gender-linked, and in general ideologically produced" (Wolff, 1983, p 27). She also warns, however, of the dangers of this reductionist sociological interpretation which relates cultural production and reception only to their contemporary socio-economic base. This consideration of art only as a vehicle for ideologies ignores the timeless nature of artistic value, whereby a work of art, or a design, can be rediscovered and enjoyed, years after its first production (Wolff, 1981, p 74).

If culture, then, serves to differentiate between the classes, how do the various cultural forms achieve this? Obviously the ideology behind a painting and a piece of design will appear in different ways, although both must stand as a display of wealth if intended for the upper end of the market, in order to reinforce the "capital" aspect of culture.

Gillian Elinor, in a discussion of art and craft, examines the sociology of these two forms (Elinor, 1989, p 30). For the purpose of this discussion, I will substitute 'design' for her 'craft'. While art is consumed in ownership, with valorisation occurring at the point of exchange, design is consumed in usage and valorisation is in terms of utility rather than exchange. Design, however, can be consumed as art if integrated into the institutions of the art world, especially in museums. Dormer distinguishes between this type of "High design" (only because it is marketed as such) and everyday design (Dormer, 1990, p 141). Only by creating this imaginary hierarchy can Design become part of "cultural capital".

However, one feature of the jewellery industry is the mass-production of imitations of high-class designs for the lower classes. It is probable, as Hall states, that different groups decode objects in different ways, producing a negotiated version of the message, incorporating connotative and contextual misunderstandings which arise from their social position (Wolff, 1981, p 110). It is also likely, then, that the designs intended for the upper-classes which were then adapted for the masses conveyed a different meaning to the latter. This meaning may even appear unintentionally subversive when decoded, unlike the original affirmative message.

The differences between art, craft and design have been briefly alluded to above. This thorny and essentially unresolvable issue is one which I do not intend to examine in any great detail, but one or two points need to be raised. The unnatural division between art and craft arose in the past in connection with the new concept of art and its function. The precise date has been questioned — Williams dates it to the 1840s, Kristeller to the seventeenth century, and Wolff places it even earlier, in the fifteenth century. While "craft" was downgraded to

the practice of dexterity in the manual arts, without creative impulse or quality, “art” stressed something more — the personal, unanalysable creative force which raised the product above the simple exercising of a skill or craft. Given that this division could have arisen no later than the 1840s, these terms need to be re-assessed in the wake of modernism.

This craft/art division is now completely unreal, as the two disciplines cannot be separated on the basis of either the means of production or the range of materials used, as Woods points out (Woods, 1989, p 22). Even the issue of function no longer distinguishes between them — Wollheim’s argument that while a work of art may have another function, it does not need any function other than being a work of art (Wollheim, 1968, p 109) can arguably be applied equally to craft, which can encompass purely aesthetic, as well as utilitarian, objects. The interchangeability of the two terms emphasises their similarity — the craft of the artist and the artistic dexterity of the craftsperson are reciprocal concepts.

The only area in which a distinction between the two terms can be made, in my view, remains largely unexplored. Art need not have an end-product, at least since the advent of performance and conceptual art. But craft must have a vehicle for the skills of the craftsperson — it needs an end-product. If there is no finished piece produced, then the process must be called art, or design, rather than craft.

Design is a third term which links with craft and art. The common perception of “design” is the process of selecting the means, elements, and procedures for producing an object which will adequately satisfy some need. As such, design is often relegated to the realm of the solely functional and utilitarian.¹

But “design” also means the preparation involved in the production of art — the selection and arrangement of the elements that make up a work of art or any man-made object. It is the thought process where the work takes shape in the head of the creator before it becomes a physical object or act. Therefore, design is part of almost every art object (with the possible exception of some deliberately random, accidental, Dadaist works or happenings), and every craft work.

Thus the relationship between art, craft and design can best be summarised by seeing them as complementary instead of opposing groups. They can then be clearly understood in relation to one another. “Design” and “Craft” overlap frequently, and both these categories fit into the larger universe of “Art”.

However, these arguments do not change the fact that when confronted with an object, it is almost impossible, and certainly presumptuously incorrect, to categorise it solely in terms of art, craft, or design.

Wollheim also argues that new art forms establish themselves on the basis of their analogies with other art forms (Wollheim, 1968, p 168). It is on the basis of the perceived dissimilarities between ‘art’ and ‘design’ that it has taken so long for design to be recognised as an art form - some would say it still is not.

Most aesthetic experience is subliminal and derived from the daily environment, rather than with the disposition assumed by the museum visitor, according to Bush (Bush, 1975, p 186). Obviously then design has more real impact on the consciousness than art, and subsequently a greater power to communicate ideologies. Design is present everywhere, and as such is inescapable, unlike the 'fine arts'. This characteristic makes it far less appealing to the elite, but at the same time makes it far more influential than art, which is largely confined to the museum. Indeed, design shapes the everyday existence which art reflects and reinterprets. This fact is reflected in recent Marxist theory.

Williams specifies that this application of culture has also to be seen as "the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes" (Williams, 1977, p 110). This ties in with the 'Culture and Class' discussion above.

The traditional Marxist model of society was composed of the base (the economic situation) and the superstructure (the political, juridical and theoretical elements). It was generally accepted that art — and design, since the two are connected — was part of the superstructure, separate from, but reflecting the base — not directly, except in the crudest versions, but mediated by culture (Williams, 1977, p 99).² (The understanding of the 'base' as material production in its variable historical form, and not as a general fixed category, is particularly important, according to Marx, as he shows in one example: "there corresponds to the capitalist mode of production a type of intellectual production quite different from that which corresponded to the medieval mode of production.") (Williams, 1977, p 81) This definition was Williams' recent interpretation, which glossed over a barer earlier model of base and superstructure, which neglected the role of culture within society.

At the same time, Williams puts forward the newer, improved version — the concept of hegemony (the values and beliefs which the dominant class develops and propagates, saturating the whole process of living), where cultural activities, such as design, may be seen as much more than superstructural expressions of a formed social and economic structure. "On the contrary, they are among the basic processes of the formation itself and, further, related to a much wider area of reality than the abstractions of 'social' and 'economic' experience." (Williams, 1977, p 111)

*1930s America: the social context**(a) Nationalism/Colonialism*

An important feature of cultural life in post-colonial America was the domination of European artistic models — European culture had an established status with which its American equivalent found it hard to compete. Cera points out that the main sources for American jewellery were European: “its formal traditions were more dominant in the collective memory and aspirations of millions of Americans, whose majority identified culture, art and style with Europe.” (Cera, 1992, p 157)

However, in the 1930s a new cultural nationalism became evident, which Orvell describes as an “effort to reclaim an American past that was ‘usable’ and that would demonstrate the country’s maturity and independence from Europe.” (Orvell, 1989, p 168) This fight for cultural autonomy took two different forms — a return to historicism, and a move towards democratising elite European models.

The historical revival was led by Hollywood, one of the main sources of nationalist pride in America in this period. An epidemic of historical films not only served to reinforce belief in the American Way, but later in the decade also helped to reassure Americans that the country would go it alone, refusing to follow Europe into anti-democratic experiments. This spate of historical films also led to a great demand for historical revival design, particularly in jewellery. “Dresses and accessories inspired by Hollywood had the same magic as those labelled ‘Made in Paris’.” (Cera, 1992, p 160)

Photoplay in 1936 reported “It has often happened that Paris has been inspired by the clothes in a major film and has developed this inspiration. The trends, in turn, are reflected in New York, and so we have the Hollywood, Paris, American tie-up.” (Proddow, 1992, p 72) Very few Americans realised how often they were looking at recycled American fashion when they admired the latest Parisian styles, and of course the designers never openly admitted it.

Duncan points out that a safe, proven market existed in America for traditional styles — an important consideration in the economic crisis of the Depression. “Period-revival styles alternated, the introduction of each carefully monitored to maintain a quiet but vigorous market.” (Duncan, 1986, p 79) Yet historicism was not necessarily an option to be used as an alternative to modernism. Joan Joseff, wife of the designer of most Hollywood jewellery at this time, advised women to combine modern and antique jewellery, just as they would furniture (Ball, 1991, p 128). This spirit of eclecticism was a particularly American characteristic, most unlike the rigid adherence in Europe to one given style.³

This willingness to combine idioms explains why Postmodernism is really an American, rather than a European, style.

Another reason for the chosen isolationism of historical American designers, paralleled in conservatism in design publications, was a growing sense of xenophobia due to the influx of foreign-born designers into the States. But if these European designers inadvertently contributed to a reactionary insular design style, they were also instrumental in spreading European modernism in their adopted country, which American designers, in their eclecticism, seized on and made their own. Orvell argues that European models offered the freedom of a new formal vocabulary to American artists searching for ways to connect with their native traditions (Orvell, 1989, p 182).

This introduces the second current of anti-European design — the democratisation of elitist European modernism. The United States did not join the League of Nations after the Great War, and this political isolationism was reflected in American cultural poverty at this time. In 1925 the government refused to send a pavilion to the Paris Exposition on the grounds that it had no modernist design (Heide, 1979, p 15).

However, by then there was a growing desire for new ideas, shown in the large number of American delegates who visited the Exposition. These returned with, for the first time, a concept of design and industry, and a new design repertoire for mass-production (Heide, 1981, p 23). This was precisely where the difference from Europe lay — while the Exposition consisted almost entirely of one-off designs, when its style was adopted by American designers it became mass-produced.

American modernism was a reinterpretation of the work of French Art Deco craftsmen to suit the needs of American consumerism, which began as highbrow but quickly filtered down to the masses. This democracy of design was unique to the States — in Europe fashion was something only for the elite (Cera, 1992, p 156). Likewise, costume jewellery originated in the haute-couture fashion-houses of Paris and was then democratised and mass-produced across the Atlantic.

Ironically, designers wishing to break free from Europe had to start their search for independence with a European design style. The reason for this was the lack of any supporting infrastructure for American designers, in contrast to Europe. There were no regular exhibitions like the Paris salon, and there was no government support of the arts until the Works Project Administration in 1933 (which had virtually no effect on jewellery and accessory design). In fact, American designers were actively hindered rather than helped by the art and retail sector. Duncan states that most department stores snubbed their local modernist designer by manufacturing cheap copies of European masterpieces which had been shown in inaugural exhibitions in the stores, rather than pursuing an

alternative national style (Duncan, 1986, p 15). Because there was no-one to finance American design experiments, American designers had to start with the results of European experiments and take it from there.

The two trends in the struggle for cultural independence from Europe, then, were Hollywood-led historicism, reaffirming national values, and what Gillian Naylor describes as the transformation of exclusive European Modernism into Modernism Inc. as it crossed the Atlantic.

(b) *Class distinctions*

Williams describes how, in the interwar period, the mass media created a new class-consciousness among the lower classes, and this self-awareness was seen by the upper-class as the threat of mob-rule, the rule of lowness and mediocrity, with the masses forming the perpetual threat to culture (Williams, 1961, p 286-288).⁴ Williams was not referring specifically to America, but in 1915, Van Wyck Brooks wrote about the division of the US into two distinct classes — highbrow and lowbrow: in everything one could see this acceptance of twin values with nothing in common (Orvell, 1989, p 153).⁵ One of the divisions between the classes that he mentions is humour, and I will examine this ideologically-constructed use of humour in jewellery later in detail.

However, there was a desire to repress class distinctions in the Depression era, and this was reflected in design, with expensive design becoming less extravagant, and the increasing adoption of costume jewellery. Hillier suggests that these muted styles for the rich may have been due to a developing social consciousness, in order that they might feel “less guilty, less like ‘bloated capitalists’ or ‘idle rich’ in this unostentatious ... setting.” (Hillier, 1983, p 95) Cera points out that the prevalence of costume jewellery in America, regardless of style, was an expression of equality over expensive, fine jewellery, which was elitist and traditional, although the former didn’t really catch on with the upper classes until Coco Chanel popularised it in the realm of haute couture in Paris in 1925 (Cera, 1992, p 156).

Although the machine was accepted as a means of democratising high culture, as aforementioned, the question was, what type of design should be standardised? Mumford identified the dilemma, in 1931, as the choice between standardisation at a low level of design (imitations of debased historical styles) and at a high level which would accept the virtues and canons of machine production (Orvell, 1989, p 180). Put another way, it was the choice between downgrading high culture for the masses, or elevating the vernacular into the realm of high culture.

Inevitably, however, the designers involved in this great democratisation of culture encountered the same problem as William Morris had, almost a century earlier: that of economy. The discrepancies between the egalitarian spirit among designers, and the reality of their designs being too expensive for the average consumer, were only too obvious. Meikle notes that in the 1931 *Annual of American Design*, all contributors wrote about the democracy of machine production, relieving the dullness of the everyday environment for the masses, but all of the illustrations in the book were of one-off luxury items (Meikle, 1979, p 26).

Regardless of the generally accepted two-tiered division of society in this time, I would like to propose, for the purpose of this argument, a more detailed breakdown into four distinct classes, based on the reaction of

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This ‘lowest common denominator’ factor in dealing with the masses can be seen in Hollywood in this period, where characters and events had to be familiar, and to have the broadest possible appeal. The characters could not be too intellectual or radical - their personalities had to be simple and their loyalties unconfused - and usually affirmative (O’Connor, 1979, p 112).

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Orvell noted that class divisions were represented in window displays — after 1910 a window was no longer judged on the basis of the quantity of goods crammed into it, but on the quality of the few high class goods selected to grace it; only in pawn shops were goods crowded into uncomfortable disorder, jostling one another as in an urban tenement (Orvell, 1989, p 144).

different groups within society to the issues and design of the time. (Whether they reacted to design in the same way because they were already a formed class, or whether their reaction to design helped give them a new class-consciousness, remains to be seen.)

At the top of the social scale was the upper class, whose taste was eminently conservative, rooted in past styles, especially those of nineteenth century French and Russian aristocracies. They had little interest in Modernism — Tiffany ignored the Paris trend, and even after his death in 1933, the firm put few Art Deco designs into production — there was simply no demand for it from America's wealthiest people (Duncan, 1986, p 246).

The next group on the ladder, in terms of wealth, was the connoisseurs, citydwellers, elite cognoscenti, and Cafe Society. The latter was the glittering, indefatigable set which emerged out of the rubble of High Society after the Depression, within which there was a new spirit of egalitarianism (Time-Life, 1969, p 144). Proddow says that the spirit of eclecticism showed in the type of jewellery they wore, mixing jewels of a royal lineage (which had changed hands at low prices during the Depression, in settlement of debts) with modern ones in an elaborate, regal style. This group embraced Art Deco wholeheartedly, and modernism in its wake.

In complete contrast to this, modernism was regarded with suspicion by old-fashioned, wealthy and pious industrialists and the greater middle class, often with immigrant backgrounds, who did not welcome change or the idea of modern liberation (Heide, 1981, p 24). Their innate conservatism represents the majority of the middle class — the minority being the upper middle class Cafe Society and their associated groups, mentioned above.

Prohibition has been analysed as a manifestation of the superiority and prestige of the old middle classes in America at this time, in particular the assertion of power by the Protestant, rural, native American against the emerging strength of Catholic and Jewish immigrants and the urban middle class. The repeal of Prohibition in 1933 signified an end of that stranglehold on society (O'Connor, 1979, p 66).

The final group is the lower class, who, due to considerations of economy, were totally at the mercy of manufacturers and designers. They were eager to try anything new; from modernist designs using new, cheaper materials and styles, to inexpensive historical imitations, also made possible by new methods and media.

Thus class can be seen as a major issue in American society in this period. Its effect on design styles was twofold — both in dictating their acceptance (or rejection) and their appearance — whether their function was to reinforce or to eliminate class division.

(c) *Race and gender issues*

Trousers were introduced as fashion garments for women for the first time in the postwar period, and the fact that they met with instant success shows that they coincided with women's desire to assert their capabilities and independence, both in the family and in the workplace. This fashion also had the advantage of a positive image in Hollywood — the fact that Marlene Dietrich often wore men's formal wear did much to popularise the style (Cera, 1992, p 166).

However, the fact that women desired a position of power did not mean that they could achieve it. Kaplan notes the tension that existed between women desiring to break out of the home, and patriarchal insistence on the home for women (Kaplan, 1992, p 150). The Depression was a particularly bad time for women trying to achieve independence; the prevailing attitude was that women should be at home, instead of taking jobs away from men. The same argument had been used during demobilisation following World War One. Basically all women were supposed to be dependent on their menfolk — married women on their husbands, and single women on their fathers. As such, it was claimed, no woman needed to work, and any woman who did was selfishly earning herself luxury money, which could be better used by a man with dependents.

This argument never quite rang true during the Depression, any more than it had after the war. The truth was that men could not support their families even if they had jobs, and any extra income was desperately needed. Brown shows that most depictions in advertising of women working outside housework occurred during the Depression. Yet even in this time of need, they were shown doing work in the home, such as selling doughnuts, so as not to distract them from their domestic duties, but to enable them nevertheless to supplement their husband's income (Brown, 1981, p 30).

Kaplan says that the inability of men to feel secure in their breadwinning roles during the Depression was to have devastating psychic consequences for them, and in turn for women (Kaplan, 1992, p 148). She analyses the depiction in cinema of dominant women being subdued and integrated into a patriarchal structure during the 1930s — a means of reassuring men that their dominant position was still intact. In a 1932 film, *Christopher Strong*, the representation of one woman's submission is depicted through "a single shot of her hand, bedecked in an expensive bracelet, extinguishing a light". She argues that this has several meanings, among them "notions of possession suggested by the bracelet, and its being a signifier of Cynthia's entry into the patriarchal feminine" (Kaplan, 1992, p 153).

This interpretation of jewellery as a sign of possession, given by a man to a woman, suggests a new significance for jewellery following the recession, reflecting changing gender relations. In the Depression, many men could not

afford to buy jewellery [expression of possession] for their women, so in theory they risked losing this possession. If the woman was the breadwinner, she could buy herself inexpensive jewellery (now an expression of independence) in which case it would follow that she had possession of herself, rather than being in his possession.

Along with these films of patriarchal dominance, there were also films released with a new breed of independent-minded heroine played by women such as Rosalind Russell, Katherine Hepburn, Bette Davis, Barbara Stanwyck, Joan Crawford and Myrna Loy (Ball, 1991, p 69). These epitomised the new independence, not only in their persons, but in the type of jewellery they wore: bolder styles emulated by ordinary women seeking a sense of their own importance, and the glamour of their on-screen heroines (Ball, 1991, p 70).

The effect of the change in meaning of jewellery, from expressing possession to signifying independence, on the appearance of this jewellery, will be discussed in more depth below.

The superficial repression of race distinctions, in certain films of this period, is belied by the often intense desire of the Black characters to be white, which implies how terrible it was to be black in North America (Kaplan, 1992, p 166).

Race was an important issue in the 1930s. Kaplan states that while the intellectual climate made possible a more sympathetic treatment of race than earlier in the century, nevertheless North America was sharply divided racially (Kaplan, 1992, p 162/3).

However, there was an extraordinary flowering of African-American culture in the 1920's — the so-called Harlem Renaissance brought with it an appreciation of jazz and of the stylized sculpture, masks and arts of Black Africa (Weber, 1985, p 18). The simultaneous growth of pride in the Afro-Americans in their ethnic origins may have been a cause or a result of this — the 1930s marked the beginning of what was to become the Black Power movement of the 60s and 70s.

This new recognition for Black art failed to achieve new respect for Blacks — only one black artist received a commission for the New York World Fair — and Hillier points out that they had little more status than a decorative accessory (Hillier, 1983, p 78).

"The presence of Blacks as exotic ornaments in an expensive white society was regarded as evidence of a liberated racial attitude, but ... the acceptance of a Black lay in his remaining vehemently and picturesquely a graduate of the cotton field and the minstrel show" (Hillier, 1983, p 79).⁶

The mass media presented very stereotyped images of Negroes and Indians, the sullen 'White man make bad medicine' depiction of the Red Indians rivalling the vacant grin permanently on the film Negro's face. And yet these were very acceptable images to ordinary Americans — the most popular radio show in the thirties was *Amos'n'Andy*, a series about two Negroes who were in fact played by two white vaudevillians.

However, Black communities in America protested about these stereotyped depictions. A particularly large protest was mounted at the time of the release of *Gone With The Wind* in 1939, as a result of the way in which "Negroes" were portrayed in the film. This failed to prevent either its release or its immense popularity. Fear and hatred of Blacks were in part the products of the ignorance of ethnic cultures fostered by these stereotyped images in the media. This can be seen in the protracted series of Negro lynchings in the South in the 1930s.

Yet the "primitivism" of American Indian art was as popular with Art Deco designers as borrowings from Black art. Annie Fatet explains: "this reclamation of the exotic and the primitive, is irretrievably tied in with a concept of the superiority of a Western/Northern civilisation which has the power to absorb, transform, and transcend." (Fatet, 1989, p 31) Once again it appears that jewellery means dominance and possession: by plundering minority art repertoires, white society is admitting, and controlling, both the motifs and the ethnic groups.

(d) *Design Issues in America in the 1930s*

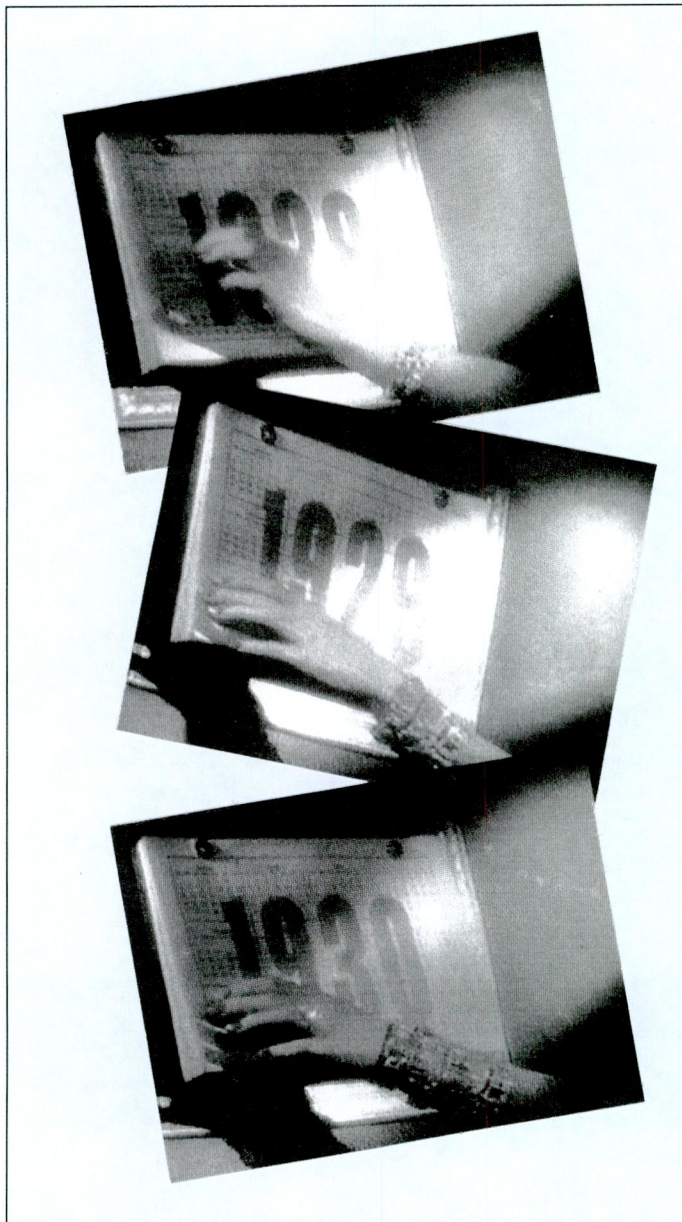
The background context in which people saw accessory design was crucially important in forming their tastes. The main forum for displaying ideas was Hollywood cinema. Given that eighty five million Americans a week went to the movies during the Depression (Time-Life, 1969, p 180), cinema attracted a far greater audience than any museum or department store exhibition.

However, Hollywood differed drastically on an ideological level from exhibitions — it too showed new products and designs, but it also showed new social patterns of behaviour, new aspirations, and gave jewellery new meanings by placing it in new physical and narrative contexts.

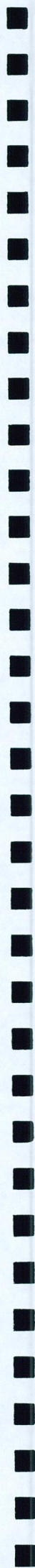
The desire to emulate film stars was a fundamental element of the American lifestyle of the 1920s and 1930s, explaining the success of fashion and costume jewellery inspired by popular movies (Cera, 1992, p 160). Ball states that movies influenced more than just sociological and psychological mores — they also created changes on a more basic level in what men, and women, desired and purchased (Ball, 1991, p 123). Meikle, on the subject of advertising in this period, notes that not only did the volume of advertisements increase, but their style also underwent a change. Instead of stating the virtues of the objects being sold, there was now a trend towards persuasion by appeal to irrational desires — “sex, success, domination or conformity.” (Meikle, 1979, p 9)

The background for Depression jewellery design, then, was the perfect world of the cinema and advertisements, and to bridge the gap between this perfection and dreary reality, people were persuaded to buy. Actresses were chosen as much for their modelling ability as for their acting. “Rags-to-riches” films were among the most common, where a poor but beautiful working girl was swept off her feet by a rich man, quickly adjusting to a life of beautiful clothes and jewellery (Proddow, 1992, p 43). Proddow, in a discussion of the film *Possessed* (1931), says that the montage in the film of Joan Crawford’s hand tearing yearly pages from a calendar serves not only to show the passage of time, but also the growing sophistication of the character, as with each year the wide diamond bracelets on her wrist grow in number (Proddow, 1992, p 53). (Illus. 1)

In 1932, Hollywood made a series of jewel-thief, and gangster movies, which briefly glorified the underworld, where gangsters and their molls indulged in every luxury (Proddow, 1992, p 58). Men wore jewellery in these films as a sign of success, while women wore it in a bold, provocative manner, exuding sensuality. The 1938 musical *The Vogues* revolved around a couturier’s love life and dripped with jewels. The jewellery industry could not blame any downturn in fortune on a lack of exposure in contemporary films.



- 1 Stills from a montage in *Possessed* (1931) showing Joan Crawford's hand tearing yearly pages from a calendar as the wide diamond bracelets on her wrist grow in number.



In terms of general film design, Hollywood tended to be ahead of its time, and very extravagant. The Depression trend for simplification was deliberately ignored on the silver screen, which had to satisfy the public's demand for magnificence to distract them from their frugal existences.

Fashion in film was always an outrageous version of current fashion. As it had to be designed six months before the film was to be shown, had the styles been too up-to-date, they could have become obsolete by the time of release (Robinson, 1988, p 184).⁷

Set design was also frequently "over the top" — streamlining appeared in Hollywood in the late 1920s while it was still at the research stage in real life. Glittering futuristic modernism, as conceived by top designers, was the backdrop for many films. These contrasted sharply with the spate of historical films of the late 1930s, which reintroduced romanticised historical designs.

Musicals frequently used fantastic pop-Deco sets: in *Music is Magic* (1935), Alice Faye jumped onto the dance floor from inside the dial of a huge radio set (Heide, 1979, p 103). This catered for audience demand for exaggerated fantasy designs, which, only partly satisfied by the movies, spilled over into the marketplace in a search for new products. In this way Hollywood lubricated the wheels of industry.

The following chapter will consider how the stars as role models, and the historical, modernistic, and fantastic backgrounds of the movies, influenced the design of jewellery.

Robinson notes that many directors were caught out when Paris hemlines dropped to anklelength overnight at the end of 1929 (Robinson, 1988, p 184).

Chapter Three

Case Study: Accessory Design in 1930s America

(a) Introduction

Jewellery and accessories are the focus of these case studies as they encompass only objects which are carried or worn, close to or on the person. As such, they embody the personal desires, attitudes, and tastes of the individual, so the general trends in these design areas can be taken as representative of the desires, attitudes and tastes of society. The reason for the inclusion of accessories in this study is to take some account of men also, as jewellery for men was very limited — almost non-existent — in this era.

Depression era designers had first to decide on the main function of their work — many of these possible functions have been discussed above. Was the function of the design to provide a sense of security in uncertain times, or to give weight to the promise of a brighter future? Was it meant as a token of possession from a man to a woman, or was it to be displayed as a woman's expression of independence (or desired independence) from the patriarchal system? Did it signify control over exotic cultures of the present and past?

Did the design have the function of showing an awareness and an embracing of modernity and the machine aesthetic, or did it express mistrust and rejection of the machine and its corresponding way of life? If intended for the rich, should it be an expression of their higher social status, or should it conceal it in deference to the plight of the poor in the recession? If designed for the poor, should the object display defiant pride in poverty, or rather conceal this low status? Was the design to be an emulation or rejection of the European dominance of style?

There are examples of jewellery and accessories from this period which exemplify each of these categories, and these will be detailed in the following sections.

The decision as to the function of the piece would then determine the style of design to suit. Other considerations which affected the form of the piece were: economy (obviously a particularly important issue in the Depression); choice of materials, which depended on their cost, and their perception in the public consciousness in this period; the desired sphere of influence of the manufacturer on the market, and the extent to which this power impinged on the freedom of the designer. These considerations will also be looked at in more depth in the next section.

Given the number of possible functions the design of this period could have, and the variety of factors which could influence the stylistic choices of the designer, it is surprising that in terms of tone and style, all the accessories of the thirties fall into one of two categories. In essence, the tone of a piece was either sober, in keeping with the serious mood of the Depression, or lighthearted, as a way of alleviating the psychological effects of economic

hardship. Stylistically, design was either historicist (representing the old Puritan values, giving a sense of security, and rejecting the machine aesthetic and methods) or futuristic (a product of the capitalist ethos, looking for a way forward out of the slump, and taking control of and making use of the machine). Meikle shows that this futuristic imagery tended to be phallogentric, in order to penetrate the bright new world of tomorrow; while images of stasis and security were generally associated with the feminine, and a desire to return to the womb (Meikle, 1979, p 184/5). The fact that streamlining rarely, if ever, appeared in jewellery design, and only occasionally in accessory design (where it features mainly on smoking accessories for men), suggests that the masculine connotations of this style were too strong to appeal to women.

(Illus. 2) These were the choices and options available to Depression designers.

If these things [functional goods provided by science and technology] were all we surrounded ourselves with our days would lack imaginative and reflective possibilities and so we collect and buy a vast range of goods which function at several levels, telling us about who we think we are, our relationship with the past, present and future, how we act in the world and which make us feel good. These selected objects/images become powerful messages to friends and strangers alike, like smells to a dog, and each addition builds our own contextual futures (Woods, 1989, p 22).

Given the economic disaster that was the Depression, the fact that there was an accessories or a jewellery industry in this period is quite astonishing, if one considers personal adornment purely from a utilitarian point of view. In this case, decorative accessories would obviously come far down on the average American's list of priorities; too far down even to consider, in most cases.

However, without any government aid, the industry survived the decade, making numerous advances in technique and design in the process. The reason for this was that jewellery and accessories had values other than purely functioning as decoration; many of these have just been listed. Woods, in the quotation above, describes the main purpose of non-utilitarian objects as giving a positive sense of identity to the person who possesses them. This, surely, was the reason for continuing accessory and jewellery sales in this period. In a time of mass unemployment and poverty, when people saw themselves as no more than anonymous bodies looking for assistance, what could be more important than a positive self-image? They could either cultivate their individual image themselves, in selecting their own look from the wide range of accessories available, or adopt an established image they had seen in the cinema, emulating it by wearing jewellery similar to that of the screen character.



- 2 Ronson Company "Touch Tip" lighter, enamelled brass, ca 1930s,
collection Mitchell Wolfson Jr.



This applied far more to women than to men, as the range of jewellery worn by men was minute, and the choice of accessories was not nearly as broad as for women. The only jewellery worn by male Hollywood stars in this era was tie-tacks, signet rings, the occasional lapel pin, and cufflinks. These were mainly worn by gangsters who usually dripped with diamonds. It comes as no great surprise, then, that not many American men sought to emulate their film hero in his jewellery styles.

So not only were most of the adornments of this period designed for women to wear, but even the male products were designed with women in mind. The reason for this was the sudden realisation by manufacturers and designers in the 1930s that women were the great national purchasing agent, being directly involved in over ninety eight percent of purchases (Meikle, 1979, p 15). As the design, manufacturing and marketing of products is based on the sex of the potential purchaser, to attract not the person who will **use** it, but whoever will **buy** it, almost all design became aimed at women (Dormer, 1990, p 87).

(b) Streamlining, and cigarette and cosmetic packaging.

The forward-looking metaphors within the streamlined style have already been discussed. To summarise, however, streamlining involved the rounding of edges to eliminate friction, creating a smoother path forward for the object. Metaphorically the style became the solution to economic crisis, smoothing the way into a newer, brighter future. In its phallic connotations the style perhaps connected with the new insecurity felt by men who were now unsure of their role as breadwinners, whose female partners were also asserting their independence. As a result it can be seen as an attempt to revive the old patriarchal structure of society, which was slowly collapsing, along with most traditions during the chaos of the Depression.

The style was first used in train design for performance enhancement. It became a popular fad, quickly hopped on by businessmen, which rapidly affected such ephemeral cultural forms as toys, movies and novelties (Meikle, 1979, p 162). Meikle writes that, for “playful adults, the Streamline Lighter Co. provided a chrome-plated, egg-shaped lighter, which split apart to reveal its striking mechanism.” (The only examples of streamlined accessories I could find were novelty smoking items, such as desk lighters and ashtrays, which, strictly speaking, are outside the scope of this thesis.)

The general principles of streamlining, however, such as rounded edges and corners, smooth, machine-finished surfaces, and a widespread crisp simplification of design, appeared in many jewellery and accessory designs. The difference between this and first-degree streamlining is that the former does not necessarily have to have been designed “in order to buffet a hypothetical tornado” — quoted from the *New Yorker* of 1939 (Greif, 1975, p 47).

The other area of accessory design which involved men was the design of cigarette packaging and matchbook covers. While Camel cigarette boxes retained their Turkish illustration, Lucky Strike, the most popular brand in the thirties, displayed in its packaging design a stark simplicity and modernity which Heide describes as “the pinnacle of advertising graphics, pop-Americana style”. (Heide, 1979, p 122) This was in itself an American nationalist piece of propaganda — while Camel sold cigarettes by evoking the culture and tradition of Europe on their packaging, Lucky Strike appealed to the desire to break away from colonial subservience and adopt the new, the fresh, and the American Way. (Illus. 3)

Another mass-produced “unisex” item, which displayed the height of modernity in its design, was the paper matchbook. A new idea in the 1930s, most of these used Art Deco, or streamlined, images and type. While some were for souvenir purposes, such as commemorative matchbooks of the major exhibitions and fairs, most were miniature advertisements. As such, they



- 3 Raymond Loewy, Lucky Strike Green cigarette packaging prototypes, ca 1940, Raymond Loewy collection. The one on the right went into production.

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's annual message to Congress. The letter is written in a formal, dignified style, and it is one of the most important documents in the history of the United States.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President. The report is written in a formal, dignified style, and it is one of the most important documents in the history of the United States.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President. The report is written in a formal, dignified style, and it is one of the most important documents in the history of the United States.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President. The report is written in a formal, dignified style, and it is one of the most important documents in the history of the United States.

5. The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President. The report is written in a formal, dignified style, and it is one of the most important documents in the history of the United States.

depicted the perfect world that streamlining and Deco hoped to achieve, the glittering, carefree society they presented recalling the escapist Utopias of contemporary Hollywood movies. (Illus. 4)

I have already mentioned that the numerous American delegates at the Paris Exposition of 1925 returned home with, above all, a new repertoire of motifs; zig-zags, sunbursts, and asymmetrical designs to use as applied decoration for packaging and accessories. (Illus. 5) This style was later to become known as Art Deco. Greif, however, points out that the motifs which arrived in America were hard and mainly angular, as zig-zags and fluted columns were easy to stamp on machine-pressed objects. This differentiated it from true Art Deco, which, he says, was soft, with lavish curves and curlicues, and flower patterns, all on hand-made objects; an understated style, compared with the bold geometry of the American version (Greif, 1975, p 28). Having been cut off from European developments because of their political isolationism, this new, upbeat, machine-inspired aesthetic appeared to Americans to spring from nowhere as a way out of the ever-decreasing circles of historical revivals. While this **was** a European style, in the spirit of nationalism it was adapted rather than adopted as the Americans hastened to make it their own by mass-producing and democratising it, in contrast to the elitism of the style in Europe.

Surprisingly enough, there was little of Art Deco, either authentic or vulgarised, in everyday American life, or even in contemporary magazines, according to Greif (Greif, 1975, p 15). He describes it rather as a short-lived vogue; applied decoration on lipstick holders, cigarette cases, compacts etc.

The cosmetics industry felt the effects of the Depression no more than did the accessories industry. On the contrary, lipstick was seen as an essential spirit-booster, and other items were sacrificed instead. In 1930 the cosmetics business was worth two billion dollars (Heide, 1979, p 28). Princess Pat, Radio Girl, Tangee, Max Factor and Outdoor Girl products were all offered in Five-and-Dimes in attractive containers.

Decorative details from inside and outside skyscrapers became motifs on cosmetic products, as did lightning bolts, chevrons, sunbursts, Aztec, Mayan and Egyptian influences, and also stylized figures. Weber adds that it was the inventive decorative combination of these traditional and modern motifs which distinguished Art Deco from other, more austere modernist styles (Weber, 1985, p 72) — and its eclecticism also differentiated it from the European convention of adhering to a single, exclusive style.

In the cosmetics industry, as in most areas, Hollywood exerted a strong influence. Hollywood-style glamour was very important in marketing. Fan magazines included self-improvement guides for women on how to emulate their favourite stars, and advertisements included various 'Hollywood cosmetics', recommended by the 'film-land experts' (Heide, 1979, p 106).



4 Art Deco matchbooks, after 1933, photograph John Gilman.



5 George W. Luft Co, Fifth Avenue, Tangee dry-rouge container, lithographed face-powder tins, and cardboard containers, with lipstick tube in black-and-red Bakelite with its original box, all five-and-dime cosmetics, 1930s, photograph John Gilman.



Readers were told that Hollywood stars did not wish to look exactly alike: "they wished to 'individualise their attractiveness' and this they did by the use of powder, rouge, lipstick and mascara, to 'dramatise the individual charm of every star, making each one so glamorous, so perfect, so desirable, that you gasp and ask yourself — Is she real?' " (Robinson, 1988, p 187) A desire for individuality, and a positive sense of identity, were as important in selling cosmetics as in acquiring jewellery. However, this sense of uniqueness was more evident in the advertisements than in the products themselves. The packaging of cosmetics, while embracing modernity with a vigour unparalleled in any other field, all appears remarkably uniform, and even the novel rounded edges on boxes and tins have a disconcerting sameness.

Different art forms react with different speeds and to different extents to social change. Accessories react faster than jewellery, and dime-store jewellery much faster than the precious kind. Duncan maintains that this discrepancy depended on the amount of resistance the modernist faced from the traditionalist in his field (Duncan, 1986, p 15).

Thus while accessories (mostly cosmetics containers) demonstrated Art Deco characteristics, the resistance to these was greater in jewellery. In fact, probably due to the fact that small-scale Deco didn't really cross the Atlantic until the 1930s (it appeared in architecture in the 1920s skyscrapers), most American designers in this area by-passed Art Deco altogether, moving straight into a machine aesthetic more appropriate to the age.

Heide describes the new style as scientific, as opposed to the flora and fauna of Deco. Duncan describes it rather as an intellectual style compared with Deco's emotional appeal (Heide, 1981, p 27; Duncan, 1986, p 12). Science and the intellect indeed had far more appeal as the means of solving problems in the 1930s than nature and the emotions⁸, hence the predominance of the new style over the old. Orvell says that the style of the twenties was an expression of the **excitement** of the machine, while the forms of the thirties expressed its **power** instead (Orvell, 1989, p 182). Here, again, the choice of one over the other is easily understood — Depression-era Americans did not need a sense of excitement in order to survive; they needed to know that they had the power to make it through to prosperity.

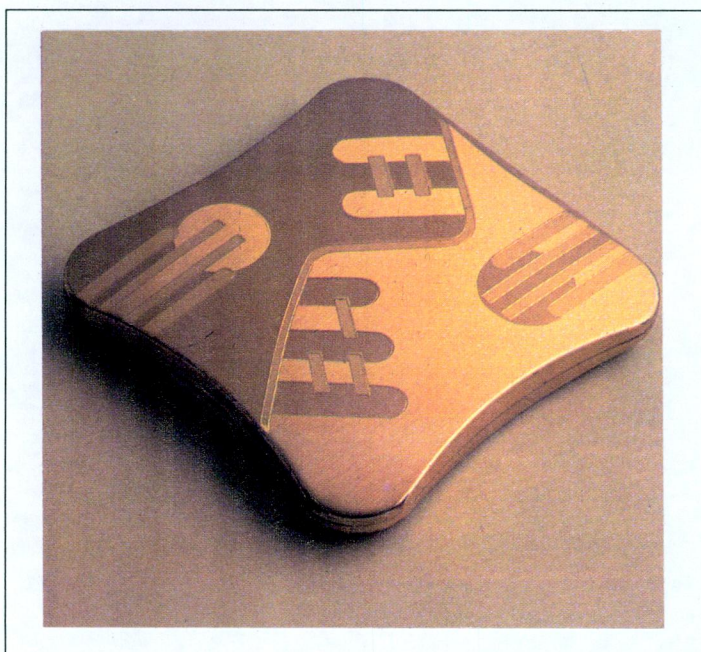
A comparison of two American mass-produced powder compacts from the 1930s serves to illustrate the above points (*Illus. 6*). They are both machine-manufactured from a brass alloy: one is in the Deco style, with leaping gazelles against a background of stylized foliage; the other is in an abstract, geometric mode, divided in two with the colours reversed on either half. The subject matter of the former is clearly inappropriate for the Depression — it has a carefree sense of frivolity which jars against its economic background. It appears strangely incongruous.

The second piece, on the other hand, is quietly upbeat. The simple, strong forms and colours give it a sense of purpose which the Deco box lacks. The rounded edges of the designs give a sense of rhythm and harmony to the case, contrasting with the staccato tension of the moving animals on the other. Finally, the machine-age design has two large discs with what appear to be 'go-faster stripes' attached to them. These create a sense of propulsion, of forward motion, which would have been interpreted in the context of the times as a path upwards out of the Depression. This type of design must have had more relevance to the lives of its purchasers, as there were far more models made in the new machine aesthetic than in the Deco style. This implies that this was the preferred style of the American public. The issue of whether manufacturers

The fact that the reverse was the case in the 1960s, after another world war and many minor interventionist ones, may suggest that the earlier faith in science and reason as the solution to wars or recessions was misplaced.



6(a) Elgin American, Illinois, powder compact and cigarette case, brass alloy, ca 1930s, collection Patricia Bayer.



6(b) American powder compact, brass alloy, "frosted" in places, late 1930s, collection Angelo Hornak.



determine the market or merely supply it is one which is too involved to examine in any detail here. For the purpose of this paper I am adhering to Meikle's model of the process. He contends that originally manufacturers were frantically trying to ascertain what the public wanted, in order to satisfy that need, but once they became adept at this they developed the process further into manipulating style trends in a process known as consumer engineering (Meikle, 1979, p 14).

Weber notes that it was World War Two, and not the Utopian social solutions of the designers, that put an end to the economic problems of the Depression (Weber, 1985, p 23).

The goal of proponents of the machine aesthetic was not to copy handicraft, producing cheap replicas of high quality designs which only the richest could afford (this aspect of machine production will be dealt with below), but to produce its equivalent in quality and design by exploiting the virtues of the machine, its logic and aesthetic, thus standardising a high level of design for the masses.

This machine aesthetic appeared both stylistically and in the use of new materials. The new style placed great emphasis on geometry, symmetry, and simple, bold forms. In accessories, such as compacts, lipstick holders, cigarette cases, manicure boxes and shoe-buckles, one marked feature of the trend was rounded edges. Large plain areas were also the norm, with a simple geometric feature (occasionally a motif leftover from the Deco style) at the centre or at another important point, or detailing at the borders, and machine-produced patterns or textures over broad expanses. Subtle contrasts of texture provided an interest which, in earlier, more prosperous times, would have been achieved by inlays of precious metals. The machine aesthetic was obviously closely tied to, if not inspired by, ongoing developments in the area of machine production.

Designers wanted a way out of the Depression through the material benefits of mechanised processes.⁹ For the most part the issue of style was secondary to the requirement that the machine be used as the manufacturing tool. The Depression meant that designers had to simplify solutions to design problems, using only materials and forms that could be reproduced economically on a large scale by craftsmen of average skills (Heide, 1979, p 15). Thus simplicity, standardisation, and mass machine-production were the main ideals of designers in this era.

However, these priorities were somewhat uncondusive to the desire of women and men at this time to create for themselves an individual identity. Designers realised this, and the possible benefits for the industry, and came up with the solution — consumer engineering. This tied in with the concept of planned obsolescence, which also came into being in the 1930s; spiralling consumption was a sound economic policy in the recession. These practices involved manipulating the consumer through a series of rapid superficial style changes (Meikle, 1979, p 83).

In this way people were partly satisfied in their search for individuality if they managed to acquire the latest new style before most, but then as it became more popular, a new style was needed in order to provide a new

alternative, and so on. Geddes had said in 1932 that good design added life to a product because it would then take longer to tire of it (Meikle, 1979, p 83). Now, with the new consumerism, that ideal seemed anachronistic and even hypocritical.

Sheldon and Arens, two consumer engineers, wrote in 1932 on obsolescence as a positive factor in design and merchandising, a “thrusting force which clears the way for the more desirable product, the more convenient article, the more beautiful object.” (Bush, 1975, p 22) This was how designers justified the policy, to themselves and others. Raymond Loewy said, in 1946, that to an American designer a conception of aesthetics was a beautiful sales curve, shooting upwards (Meikle, 1979, p 134).

An examination of one page of the 1938 catalogue of the ‘Hagn Merchandiser, Chicago’ will suffice to show the variety of machine-produced styles which flooded the market. (Illus. 7) This page is dedicated to compacts, and they range in price from sixty five cents to three dollars; an affordable selection. There are four compacts which could be described in terms of the machine aesthetic, although two of these have hard edges instead of rounded ones, and two also have floral and animal decorative motifs which certainly could not be called modern. Two others have William Morris-type flower patterns etched on their lids, and a third has these as a running border around the sides of the box. The most expensive example has a gem-encrusted vegetal design on the lid, which, again, has origins far from any modernistic style. A portrait head features on another, and the remaining two models are “Louvre Compacts”, decorated with “hand-painted reproductions of priceless paintings by famous artists”; these are obviously in a historical style. The economic chaos of the decade would appear to be strongly reflected in its stylistic turmoil.

Popular belief in the perfection and comfort of a new machine-made society led to the machine aesthetic, but the conflict between fear and acceptance of the new machine age and technology reflected on this new aesthetic (Heide, 1981, p 25).

The machine, however, did allow for a greater democracy of design in accessories, which encouraged, superficially at least, the growth of a more equal society, and one which sought to distance itself from Europe in this egalitarianism as well as in terms of style. Streamlined accessories and adapted Art Deco cigarette and cosmetics packaging asserted America’s independence from her colonial parents. The new American machine aesthetic also proclaimed her power to propel herself out of the Depression and into a more prosperous, modern future, where class and gender conflicts would no longer exist — this, at least, was the vision of many designers. Whether the public also adhered to these ideals will become clearer with an examination of the jewellery of the time.

COMPACTS THAT ARE DEFINITELY NEW

ILLUSTRATIONS ARE ABOUT 1/2 ACTUAL SIZE



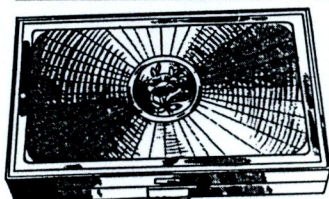
CHARLEY MCCARTHY

No. 823J228—Charlie McCarthy Compact by Evans. This clever compact is an immediate hit when shown. Golden bronze finish, hard-baked, glossy, white enamel cover with raised Charlie McCarthy head. English grosgrain engine-turned back. Contains large glass mirror, large puff and loose powder compartment. Each 85c



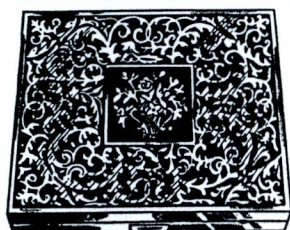
TOPAZ AND AMETHYST STONES

No. 823J220—Glamorous Jeweled Compact, set with simulated full-cut, sparkling stones. 5 topaz, 8 amethysts and 2 simulated emeralds. Deep golden bronze finish with attractive raised filigree border. Contains large, beveled-edge mirror, loose powder compartment, lip paste, cake rouge and 2 puffs. Each \$3.00



LUSTROUS SIMULATED CLOISSONNE

No. 823J223—Book-Shape Compact. Sparkling simulated cloisonne top in popular colors of pink, gold and turquoise with enameled border to match. Yellow gold-plated engine-turned back and trim, floral decoration in center. Contains unbreakable mirror, large-size cake rouge, loose powder compartment and 2 puffs. Each 65c



YELLOW FINISH THIN MODEL

No. 823J221—Wafer Thin Compact. Beautifully etched top in assorted attractive patterns with black enamel inlay. Polished yellow finish. Contains large, beveled-glass mirror, large powder compartment and puff. Engine-turned back. Each 80c

"LOUVRE" COMPACTS

Hand-Painted Reproductions of priceless paintings by famous artists grace the top of these convenient slender compacts. The artists name and the name of the original are on the back. A border of deep ivory sets the exquisite paintings off to advantage. Some of the subjects are Romeo and Juliet, Wood by the Winds, A Gallant Gentleman, April Showers, etc. All have real mirrors and generous puffs. Loose powder styles only.



A Gallant Gentleman

No. 823J227—Cookie Style. Yellow-plated, embossed sides and trim. A very popular size.

Each 85c Per dozen \$9.00



WOOD BY THE WINDS

No. 823J226—Square Style. Yellow-plated, polished sides and trim.

No. 823J225—As above with hand-painted garden and cottage scenes taken from original oil paintings.

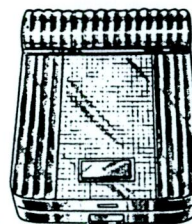
Each 85c Per dozen \$9.00

RHINESTONE BASKET ORNAMENT

YELLOW GOLD PLATED

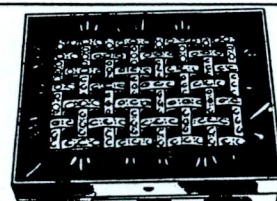


No. 823J214—Double Compact. Fine quality, hard-baked, glossy enamel front and back. Raised rhinestone basket ornament with pastel enameled flowers. Yellow gold-plated, embossed edge and interior. Contains unbreakable mirror, loose powder compartment, cake rouge and 2 puffs. Colors are black, white and pastel blue. Each \$1.00



FULL SIZE LIPSTICK

No. 823J229—Triple-Style Compact by Evans. Golden bronze finish with English grosgrain and engine-turned design. Polished signal for engraving. Contains loose powder compartment, cake rouge, full-size swivel lipstick, unbreakable mirror and 2 puffs. Each \$1.40



GORGEOUSLY RHINESTONE SET

No. 823J216—Thin Model Compact. Extremely smart design. Fine quality, hard-baked, glossy enamel front and back, elaborate rhinestone decoration on cover. Contains loose powder compartment, lip paste, cake rouge, 2 puffs and large unbreakable mirror. Black or white enamel. Gold-plated interior and edges. Each \$2.50



RHINESTONE SWORDFISH MOTIF

No. 823J218—Thin Model Book Compact. Fine quality, hard-baked, glossy enamel front and back. Raised rhinestone swordfish with pastel enamel trim. Yellow gold-plated interior and edge. Contains unbreakable mirror, loose powder compartment, cake rouge and 2 puffs. In black, pastel blue and white. Each \$1.00



YELLOW FINISH MESH STYLE

No. 823J223—Large-Size Powder Pouch. Beautifully etched top with black enamel inlay in assorted designs. Yellow gold finish, lightweight armour mesh. Fitted with large-size velour puff, unbreakable mirror and loose powder sifter. Each 85c

34 A GIFT THAT IS ALWAYS APPRECIATED

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of history is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sense of national identity. The author points out that the study of history can help us to understand the causes of the problems we face today and to find ways to solve them. It can also help us to appreciate the achievements of our ancestors and to learn from their mistakes.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the role of the government in the development of the United States. It is argued that the government has played a crucial role in the development of the country, from the founding of the nation to the present. The author points out that the government has been responsible for the establishment of the Constitution, the creation of the federal system, and the development of the economy. It has also been responsible for the protection of the rights of citizens and the promotion of the general welfare.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the role of the individual in the development of the United States. It is argued that the individual has played a crucial role in the development of the country, from the founding of the nation to the present. The author points out that the individual has been responsible for the creation of the Constitution, the development of the federal system, and the promotion of the general welfare. It has also been responsible for the protection of the rights of citizens and the promotion of the general welfare.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the role of the future in the development of the United States. It is argued that the future is a time of great opportunity and challenge. The author points out that the future will be shaped by the choices we make today. It will be a time of great progress and achievement, but it will also be a time of great struggle and sacrifice. We must therefore prepare ourselves for the future by working hard and by being responsible citizens.

Case Study: Jewellery Design in 1930s America**(a) Machine Production and the Machine Aesthetic**

Obviously the two areas of accessories and jewellery overlap extensively, and many of the above-mentioned areas of accessory design also had equivalents in jewellery. The concerns of their designers were the same — in fact they were often the same designers. However, the same people did not wear both — while both sexes carried smoking accessories and saw packaging designs, jewellery was worn mainly by women. As such it has a different slant, presenting a different outlook on the Depression, and some styles did not transfer from accessories to jewellery, and vice-versa. Streamlining was one such, and the reasons for this have already been explored. Others, such as floral designs, remain mainly in the area of jewellery, only rarely appearing in accessory design.

One style which appeared in both was the machine aesthetic, the theory of which has already been discussed in relation to accessories. In jewellery the style manifested itself in different ways. Geometry, again, was the keyword, but here there were two different disciplines in which the machine appeared. The first was in metal jewellery, which generally combined a cheap metal, often plated, with rhinestones and various cabochon stones.¹⁰ Geometrically shaped areas contrasted with each other, due to the alternation of rhinestone-filled sections with bakelite or plain metal ones, or with empty spaces. These cheap pieces were not the only ones in this style; very similar ones had diamonds instead of rhinestones, chrome instead of platinum, and rubies replaced bakelite. The close resemblance of these pieces, at opposite ends of the spectrum, begs the question — which came first?

Cera maintains that there is no clear answer to this question. While individual craftspeople, free from commercial restrictions, can be more innovative in design than mass-producing jewellers, it could also be argued that due to the expense of one-offs, craftsmen can't afford to take risks. Mass-producers, however, create so many cheap ranges that some can be wildly experimental; costs can be covered by other successes if they fail (Cera, 1992, p 157). It is probably wisest to assume that both fields influence each other to a certain extent, equal amounts of innovation and imitation being attributable to both sides.

The similarity of the style in both areas of design shows the concern of the upper-classes not to display wealth too obviously during the Depression — the mark of a new social conscience, perhaps. The second area of machine-age jewellery is plastic products, taking account of the changes in materials used in this type of design, as well as its stylistic features.

Plastic was the main new material used in jewellery and accessories. It carried with it a sense of romanticism, which Frankl described: through the "alchemy" of synthetic chemistry, "base materials" were transmuted into "marvels of

Rhinestones are colourless, faceted glass stones used in jewellery, sometimes foil-backed to imitate diamonds. The name originally referred to gemstones cut from rock crystal from the Rhine river, but historically it has been applied to faceted rock crystal in general. Cabochons are stones cut in convex form, without facets. They are usually highly polished, and became popular for the first time in the 1930s.

beauty... expressive of our own age." (Meikle, 1979, p 30) Contrary to the inferior image of synthetic materials today, *Fortune*, in 1936, described the new materials as 'glamorous' precisely because they were man-made.

However, this sense of romance was only associated with plastic after it managed to cast off its image as a cheap imitation material, which was achieved by emphasising its own qualities, values, and intrinsic beauty. In this it parallels the development of the perceived image of the machine —the machine also first acquired a sense of romance in the 1920s and '30s. This was because this was the period when the machine lost its image as a method of producing inferior copies of goods, mainly because of the new machine aesthetic, which enabled its own virtues to come to the fore.

The new machine style, then, was ideally suited to the new materials; intricate jewellery combined Catalin with stylish materials such as chrome, aluminium and brass,¹¹ and traditional materials such as wood and leather were re-explored to serve the new. Most of the machine-age jewellery, however, was in plastic, with some occasional metal in the form of chain links or catches.

As in metal jewellery, plastic examples were in a bold, chunky geometric style. There was no question of imitation of any other material here; obviously these adornments were intended for confident, unpretentious women. In fact, Catalin plastic offered a better range of colours than any other material, and they were put to full use in order to lift low spirits during those times.

Plastic jewellery transcended issues of class. As frivolous, trivial jewellery which women bought for themselves as an expression of independence as well as a statement of their own personalities and desires, it had no equivalent in fine jewellery. It was worn by a vast majority of women right across the social spectrum.

Chunky multicoloured plastic chains and moulded plastic bangles dominated the marketplace. These came in all colours and shapes; stripes, polkadots and fluting were the most common decorative designs. Here, as in metalwork, ribbing and other machined textures were used to create a variety of tactile experiences. (Illus. 8)

Meikle points out that the most economical methods of making moulds for plastic products lent themselves to machine-age styles (Sparke, 1990, p 49). By emphasising contours rather than details, by sandblasting moulds for texture, and by creating contrast through the use of cheap metal inlays instead of expensive engraving, a manufacturer was able to supply modernism in jewellery at a reduced cost. Rounded edges also meant that cutting and polishing could be done by machine; straight edges required expensive hand-finishing (Meikle, 1979, p 81). In fact, one journalist even claimed that the requirements of plastic mould technology had inspired streamlining as a design style.

Catalin was a brand of plastic, made of cast resin, which was particularly favoured for jewellery because of its strength, range of colours, and ready machinability.



8 Stack of clear "Deco" bangles, ca 1930s.



The conflict between fear and acceptance of the machine, however, led to a divergence of design styles — the machine aesthetic was only one of several. People wanted the economic benefits of machine-production, in the form of cheaper goods, but many were unwilling to change their tastes in order to obtain this. Meikle reports that bakelite and celluloid imitations of amber, ebony, onyx and alabaster were now within reach of everyone (Sparke, 1990, p 42), and while this did create a more democratic industry, it also led to a proliferation of cheap, imitative designs.

Another reason for this copying of other materials and designs was the prevailing attitude towards the hierarchy of design, with handicraft at the top of the scale. A *Fortune* article in 1946 said that a woman who wants a typical piece of costume jewellery wants an object in the historic ornamental tradition developed by patient, expensive handcraftsmanship, but she wants it at the kind of price made possible by mass-production methods (Cera, 1992, p 151). Here, again, is design breaking down the divisions between classes; if craftsmanship was a feature of design for the upper classes, and its appearance could now be replicated using cheaper techniques and materials, then, at least at a surface level, America became a more egalitarian society. This obviously was the aim of most Americans; mass-produced Catalin jewellery accounted for fifty percent of jewellery sales in the US in the 1930s (Heide, 1981, p 118).

That the goal of such a synthesis [between a popular, machine-based consumer culture and the craft tradition] remains a persistent thread in American material culture of the early twentieth century is itself significant evidence of how cultural values condition and modify technological implementation and of how intertwined the effects of ideas and of material conditions are upon one another (Orvell, 1989, p 159).

(b) Diamonds and Gems.

Diamonds and gems were something only the rich could afford during the Depression. Everyone, other than those with an extravagant income or inheritance, had to make do with rhinestones and other semi-precious gems. However, even for the ultra-rich, considerations of economy applied in design, possibly due more to the precarious financial position of designers than of clients.

Proddow points out that in the wake of the Crash, more jewels changed hands than ever before, some at very low rates, so that the depressed gem market brought about a new interest in resetting old gems. Two-dimensional jewellery was no longer economical in spite of this; solid expanses of gems were simply too expensive to assemble. Instead broad openwork diamond bracelets relied on empty spaces as much as gem patterning for their bold look — these spaces representing considerable financial saving to the jeweller (Proddow, 1987, p 107). These particular features were usually incorporated into jewels that were an exaggerated interpretation of Art Deco pieces. (Illus. 9)

With the advent of the machine style, however, this diamond openwork gave way to pave diamond surfaces set with huge cabochon gems, due also to the increased prosperity of the mid-thirties (Proddow, 1992, p 83,). While it is true that there were some loosely machine-style-inspired jewels made, with geometric shapes, rounded corners, and a general appearance of industrial crispness, the stronger trend favoured a more conservative approach, supported by the conservative aristocracy and upper class. The vast majority of fine jewellers preferred to produce pastiches of earlier European styles, such as classical, medieval, Renaissance and Victorian, the exact opposite to unornamented machine-age designs.

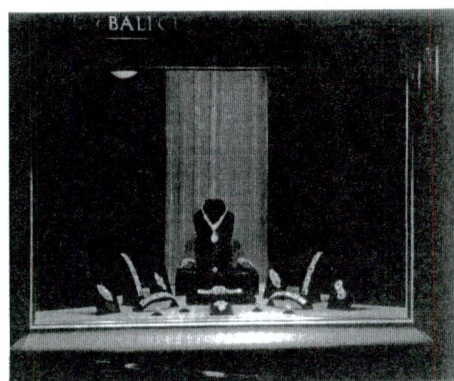
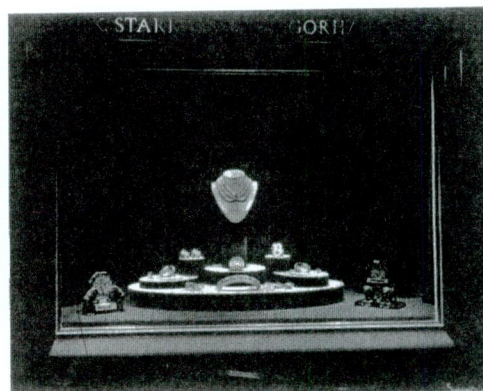
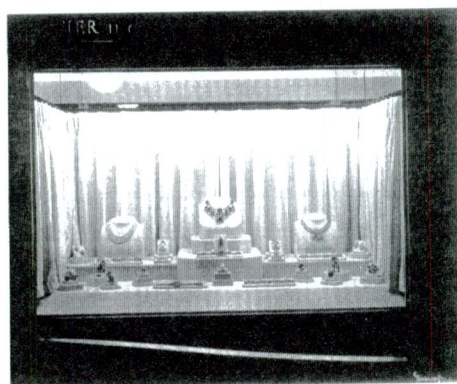
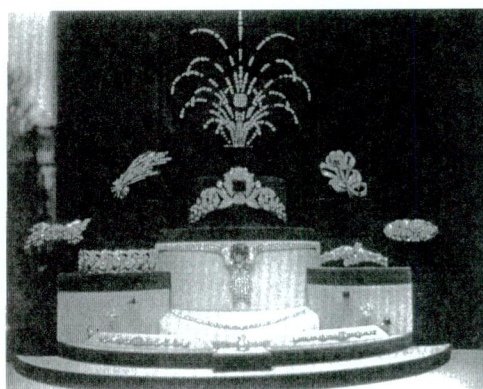
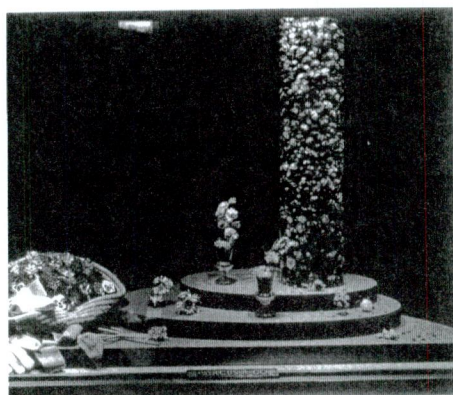
Conservatism in high design is an acknowledged fact, but the reason why it was so prevalent during the Depression may be connected to financial worries. Even the very rich, during the Depression, could not be assured of continuing prosperity, and had the exorbitant jewels they bought been very current in style, when the style dated the purchase of a more up-to-date piece may not have been affordable. Historical jewels could not date, and as such were a better investment.

These several trends in precious jewellery climaxed in the House of Jewels, the smallest building at the New York World's Fair, in 1939. (Illus. 10) It was also the most sumptuous exhibit, in spite of its size, according to Proddow (Proddow, 1987, p 121). Five Fifth Avenue jewellers displayed their most exclusive designs in very precious materials. Proddow notes that the jewellery at this exhibition was bigger and bolder than in 1925, in spite of the recession in the intervening years (Proddow, 1987, p 121). This was probably due to the new, more positive and independent role which women, as has been shown,



9 George Deligne, magazine illustration for Harpers Bazaar, 1932.





- 10 The display cases of the five Fifth Avenue jewellers in the House of Jewels at the 1939 New York World's Fair: Marcus & Co, Tiffany & Co, Cartier New York, Black, Starr & Frost, Udall & Ballou.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and the role of the accounting department in ensuring the integrity of the financial statements. It also highlights the need for regular audits and the importance of transparency in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the implementation of internal controls to prevent fraud and ensure the accuracy of financial data. It outlines the key components of a robust internal control system, including segregation of duties, authorization procedures, and regular monitoring and evaluation.

3. The third part of the document addresses the challenges faced by organizations in managing their financial resources effectively. It discusses the importance of budgeting, forecasting, and cost management, and provides practical advice on how to overcome common financial management challenges.

4. The fourth part of the document explores the role of technology in modern accounting and finance. It discusses the benefits of using accounting software and the importance of staying up-to-date with the latest technological advancements in the field.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes by emphasizing the importance of continuous learning and professional development for accounting and finance professionals. It encourages individuals to stay current in their knowledge and skills to ensure they are equipped to handle the evolving demands of the industry.

adopted during these years, which Hollywood dictated required bolder jewellery. It probably was also influenced by the new chunky look popularised by developments in plastic jewellery.

Trabert & Hoeffler-Mauboussin offered a less expensive alternative to those who could not afford custom-made jewellery, but wanted something more exclusive than mass-produced imitations of gems. They introduced a line of jewellery called Reflection, where clients took their pick from a selection of patterns and stones and got a unique, individually-styled jewel that only the rich could previously afford (Proddow, 1992, p 85).

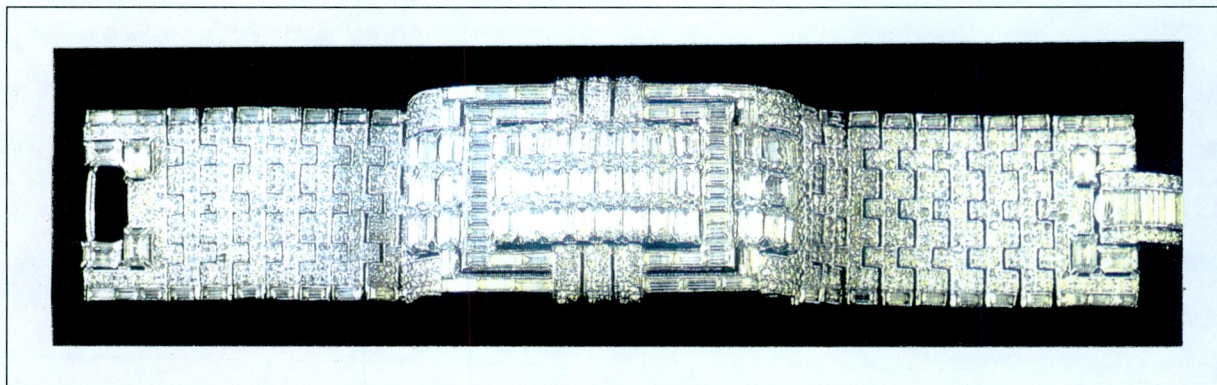
However, this innovative measure was one of the rare bridges between fine jewellery and costume jewellery in this era. Here, as in many areas at this time, Hollywood led the way in spreading the fashion for costume jewellery. Once Chanel had popularised it in France, it became acceptable to the upper classes as well. DiNoto points out, however, that Chanel's glass and metal replicas of her own personal jewels were in a sense opulent, and not quite in the same class as the plastic novelties being produced at the time (DiNoto, 1984, p 38).

Rhinestones were the cheap alternative to diamonds in jewellery at this time. Huge quantities of these were brought to America as a source of wealth by immigrants from Europe, so much so that they flooded the market, lowering the price (Cera, 1992, p 380). Cera writes that they became very popular, set into glistening white rhodium, a new non-tarnishing electroplated finish invented in the early 1930s (**Illus. 11**), which gained favour with the new, liberated woman, for whom polishing jewellery was an unnecessary chore. Used to imitate Art Deco precious jewellery, in diamonds and platinum or gold, as mentioned above, historical styles in these materials were reproduced as well.

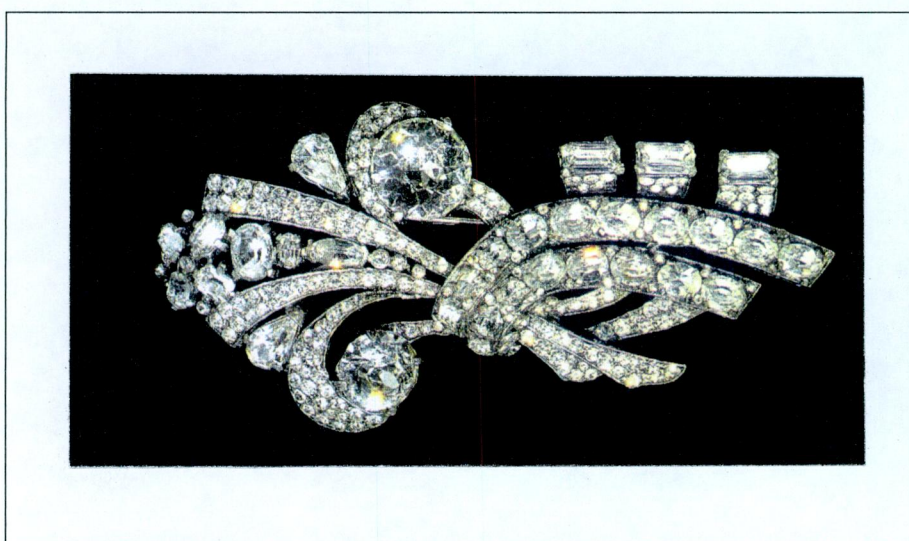
Tiny rhinestones were gradually replaced with larger cabochon stones, to satisfy the demand for bolder styles from these independent women. Eventually rhinestones were only to be found as borders around large semi-precious stones. These massive, brightly coloured adornments were particularly suited to women who wore trousers, or masculine suits, as an expression of this new freedom, as they provided a touch of elegance when worn (Cera, 1992, p 166). (**Illus. 12**)

This new machine-style jewellery of the 1930s needed publicity — designers looked to Hollywood for support, and the stars took to the new trend.

They happily traded the small, faceted and fancy-cut stones of the previous style for cabochon emeralds, star sapphires, and star rubies whose domed surfaces and sugar-loaf forms loomed large in their rings, bracelets, clip brooches and necklaces. From Hollywood they launched the first American jewellery style... During the glamour years of Hollywood, cabochon stones became the mark of an extravagantly chic woman (Proddow, 1992, p 83).

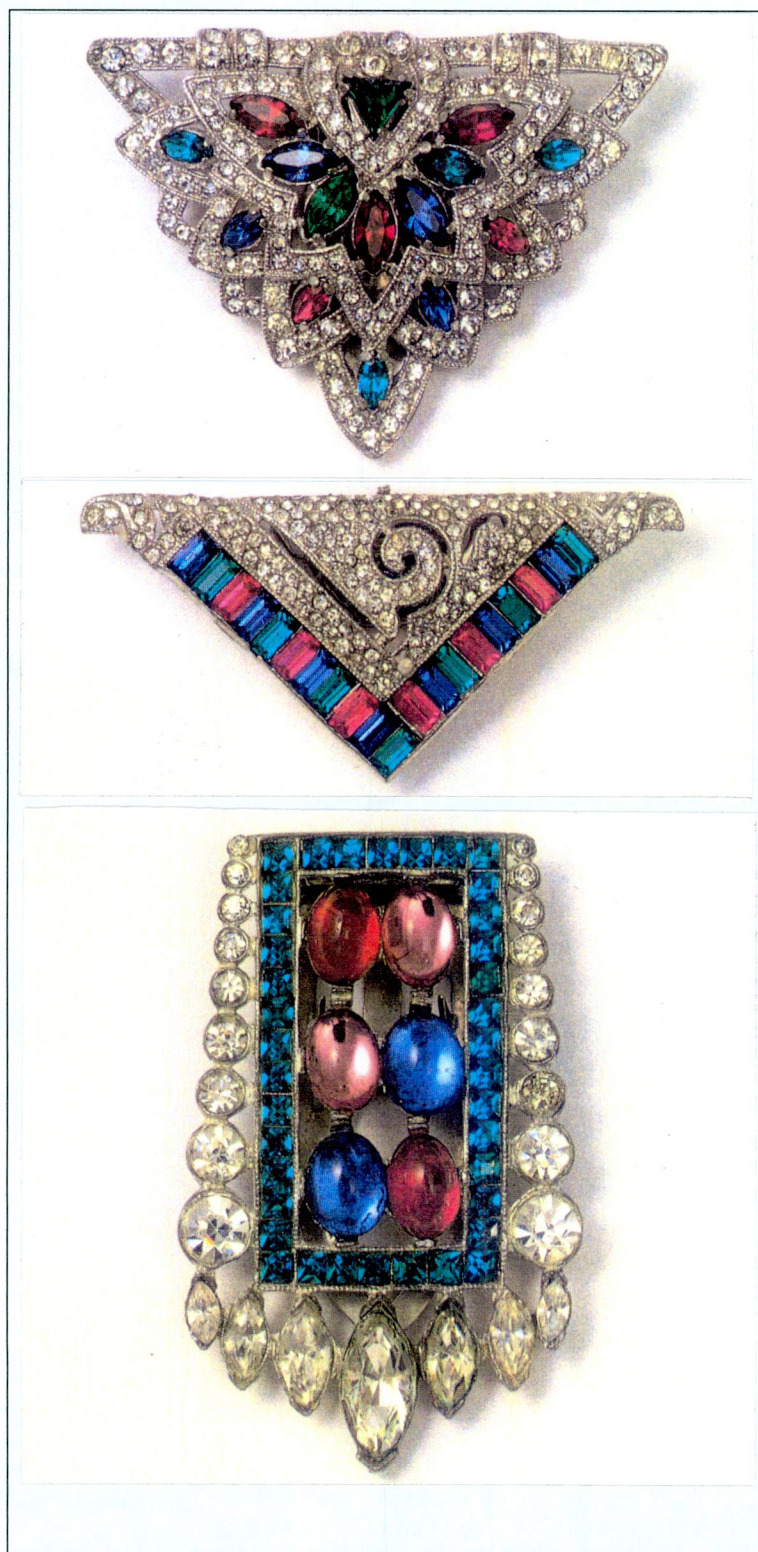


11(a) American manufactured bracelet, rhodium-plated metal and rhinestones, ca 1935, Clive Kandel collection.



11(b) Eisenberg & Sons, brooch, white metal alloy with rhinestones, baguette-cut stones, multifaceted transparent Swarovski crystal stones, ca 1935, private collection.





12 Three Art Deco brooches, with rhinestones, the bottom one also has multicoloured cabochon stones, 1935.

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4. The fourth part of the document provides a detailed overview of the accounting cycle, from the initial recording of transactions to the final preparation of financial statements. It includes a step-by-step guide to each stage of the cycle, ensuring that all necessary steps are followed to produce accurate and reliable financial information.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the role of technology in modern accounting practices. It explores the benefits of using accounting software and the importance of staying up-to-date with the latest technological advancements in the field.

6. The sixth part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed throughout the document and offers recommendations for further improvement in financial management practices. It emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and adaptation to changing business environments.

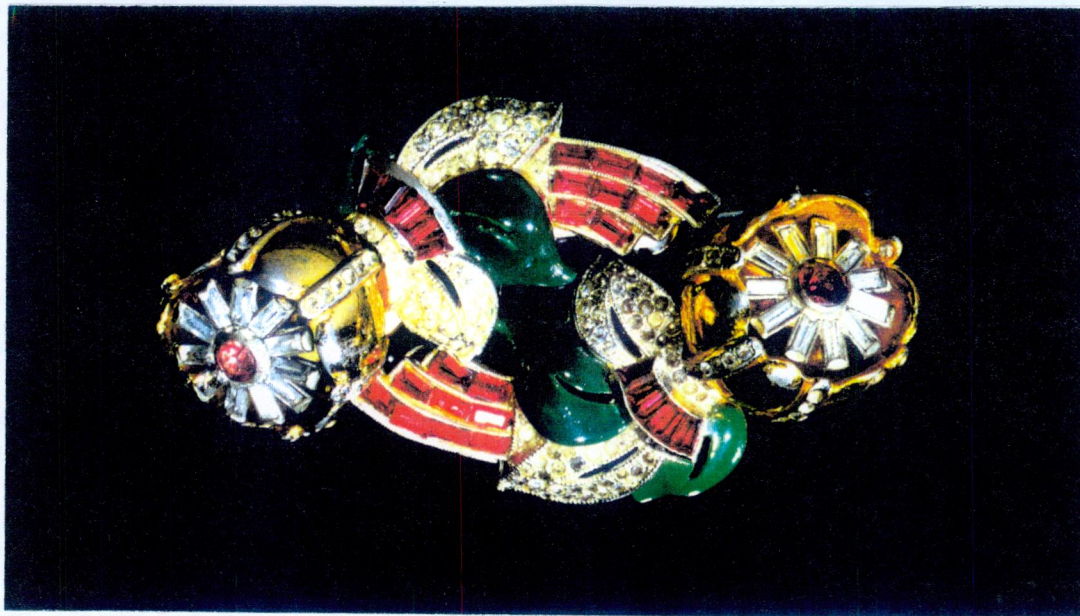
One particular item of jewellery which often dripped with diamonds, rhinestones or cabochons was the double clip brooch. The patent for the device, originally from France, was bought by an American firm which then produced its own fastener, and purchased designs from freelance designers for clips suitable for that style of presentation (Cera, 1992, p 153), thus making it a particularly American item. This followed the general irony of American "nationalist" styles originating in Europe.

The popularity of this type of brooch, which split into two separate clip brooches, was due in part to the influence of fashion, and also to considerations of economy. The fashion in the mid-thirties for a square neckline meant that twin clips, which could be worn at either corner of the neck, were perfect for this style. Other feminine dresses which widened at the shoulder cried out for the placement of a clip brooch, which did not pierce the material, at the base of shoulder straps, at a hollow of the drapery, or at the end of the back decolletage (Proddow, 1987, p 107). (Illus. 13)

Considerations of economy made this piece the first priority when starting a jewellery collection, at all levels of society.¹² The fact that these were manufactured from both platinum and diamonds, at one end of the scale, and rhinestones and rhodium, at the other, shows their popularity with all classes of society. However, twin clips were not the only combination pieces that the industry introduced to meet reduced budgets. Duncan points out that there were also chokers which could be separated into a pair of bracelets and a brooch, and solitaire rings were made with detachable bezels, which permitted the central stone to be interchanged with others of a different colour.

Most clip brooches were in the form of two flowers, with leaves and bows sometimes included. Flower designs will be discussed in the next section in the context of historical jewellery.

Joseff, the Hollywood jewellery designer, wrote many articles on accessorising during the Depression. He advised people starting a collection to buy a brooch first, then earrings, because these could be worn anywhere and on anything; as hatpins, on shoes, lapels, etc. A chunky ring was the next priority, then finally a bracelet and necklace, as these could not be worn with such a broad range of outfits (Ball, 1991, p 126).



- 13 Cohn & Rosenberger, "Quivering Camellias" brooch, separable into two clips in the shape of camellias with movable pistils, gold-plated metal, partially painted green, baguette-cut, red and white stones, and pave-set rhinestones, 1938.



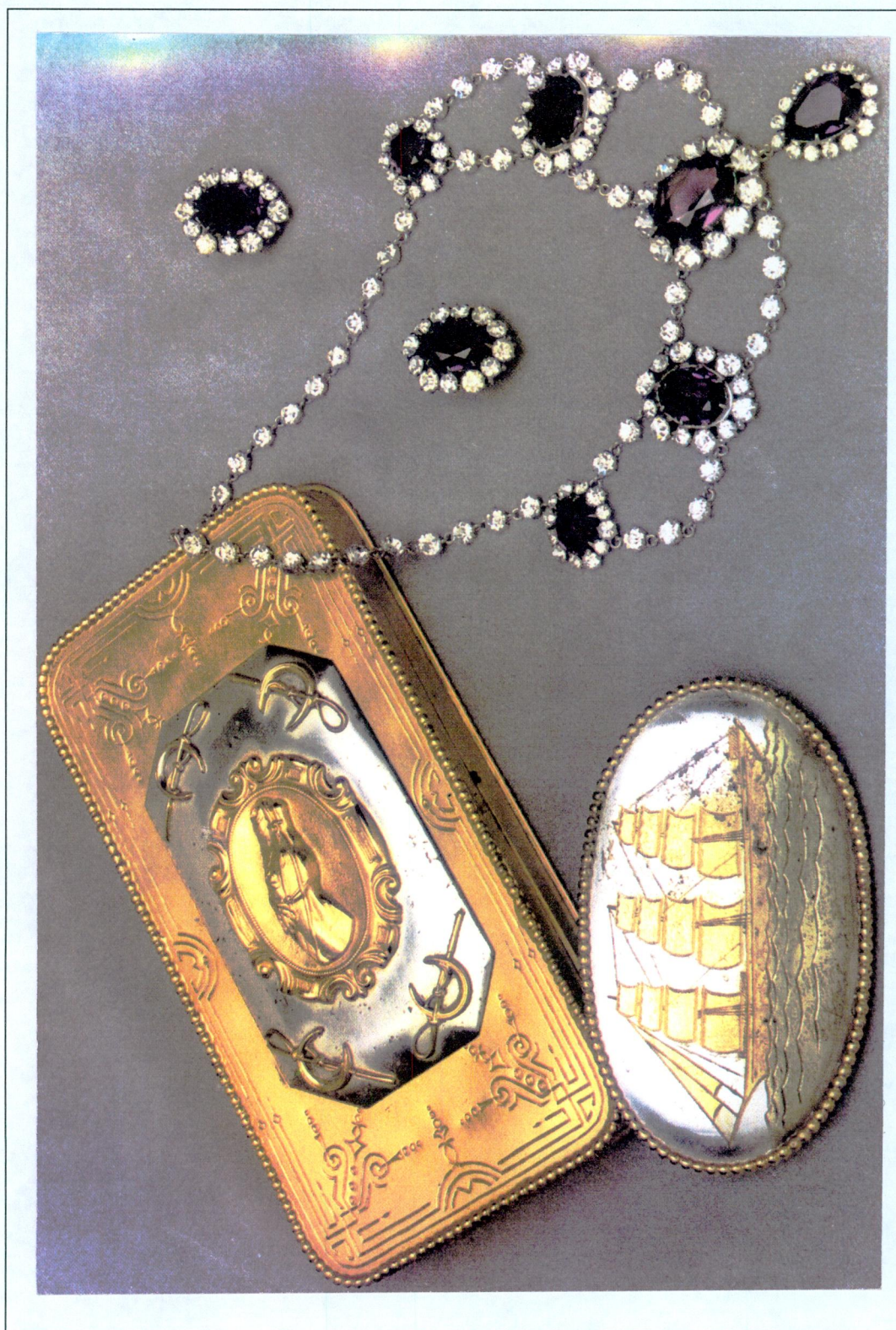
(c) *Historical jewellery.*

Mumford wrote, in the 1930s, that many Americans were “looking in the rearview mirror while driving full speed ahead, not fully content with the direction in which things were heading.” (Orvell, 1989, p 159) The nationalist connotations of the American fondness for design historicism have already been discussed. American conservatism in design dated to well before the 1930s, and it was fostered further by craft and design societies, especially the Design schools of America, which taught students to produce craft items derived from a wide range of historical styles, learned from models in museums (Meikle, 1979, p 20). This probably explains why most modernistic design was done by designers who had few, if any, ties to the craft tradition, but came into jewellery design from another field.

As was the norm in this period, Hollywood had an influential role in disseminating the new historicism. This particular type of historical design differed from previous eras, in that it reinterpreted various styles with new materials and new concerns in mind, rather than a straightforward copying of earlier models. Thus a new hybrid was formed; the diffused reflection of history through the prism of modernism.

The prevalence of historical films in the late 1930s, culminating with the epic *Gone with the Wind*, as an escapist response to the threat of impending war, gave a strong impetus to the production of historical jewellery, both for use in films and for retail marketing (Illus. 14). Ball states that Hollywood also turned passionately royalist in the mid-1930s, with a series of films such as *Marie Antoinette* and *Conquest*, a film about Napoleon (Ball, 1991, p 24). This royalist influence may have been due to the interest in King Edward's relationship with the American Wallis Simpson, which was the centre of media attention at this time. Revival movie heroines sparked off nostalgic styles in jewellery (Proddow, 1992, p 65). This shows the intense power of the Hollywood image, in a society where, a few years earlier, only dowagers, maiden aunts, and ageing actresses wore historical jewellery.

Hollywood styles, as already mentioned, had a tendency to be extravagant and larger-than-life, and historical jewellery was no exception to the rule. Styles recreated included ancient Egyptian, in *Cleopatra* (which tied in nicely with Egyptian influences in Art Deco); French Empire, *Conquest*; African and Oriental, *Algiers*; American Civil War, *Gone with the Wind*. Medieval-style filigree was a favourite, as were Spanish Baroque and Italian Renaissance effects. There was also a proliferation of English Victorian floral and plant themes, which were restyled into a modern repertoire in many films.



- 14 Joseff, Clark Gable's cigar case and Scarlett's necklace from her honeymoon from *Gone With the Wind*, 1939, Joan Castle Joseff collection. The case was designed with two interchangeable plates so it would appear to be two separate pieces.



These floral styles were a strong current in the 1930s design world. Their appearance in both historical and contemporary films lent them great popularity, with film stars frequently wearing flower brooches from their own collections to public gatherings. Not only did Hollywood royalty take on this style, however; Wallis Simpson has already been mentioned as a source of national pride, and when she was photographed wearing a Van Cleef & Arpels brooch composed of a spray of wild flowers in diamonds and sapphires, she inadvertently launched a 'Flower style' in American jewellery.

(Proddow, 1987, p 119).

Flowers, and other romantic ornaments such as hearts, lace and bows, were also very important in jewellery to accentuate the femininity of women who were forced into work during the Depression, and had to wear masculine clothes. These gentle ornaments were "an externalised sign of the wished-for sentimentality of the times." (Cera, 1992, p 155) This new romantic style also tied in with the new use of cabochon stones in jewellery, as they could be impressively set within rhinestone leaves and stems, or indeed diamond ones, as this style too crossed the boundaries of class. (Illus. 15)

This floral trend was adopted with relish for another reason as well: it pandered to the ever-present need for cheaper production methods. The economic benefits of reusing old moulds, and mixing these cast pieces with new parts, varying the piece slightly, were particularly suited to the production of various ranges of similar flower brooches, earrings and bracelets, especially when a design was successful and sold well (Cera, 1992, p 153). What could be more appropriate to this practice than bunches of different coloured flowers?

This transformation of nineteenth century plant designs into a new floral style to symbolise the concerns of the modern age, is only one example of the liberal way in which creative Depression jewellery designers drew on images from the past to define the immediacy of the present. The fact that the source was mainly the European past did not make the style any less American in spirit. In fact, this genre represented the desire of a large section of American society to deliberately maintain connections with European design styles, still perceiving Europe as the leader in matters of taste. This was a conscious rejection of attempts by younger designers to form a vernacular, American, machine aesthetic style, as discussed above.



15 MGM Publicity still, showing Joan Crawford wearing a flower basket brooch, ca 1930s.



(d) Americanisms in jewellery — the narrative tradition.

The American taste for literalness of expression has already been seen in the context of pop-Deco film sets. It also manifested itself in the pop architecture at the New York World's Fair in 1939. The huge NCR building was one example, designed in the shape of a giant cash register, contrasting sharply with the European taste for abstraction.

DiNoto notes that what American jewellery may have lacked in hard European chic, it made up for in human and childlike imagery (DiNoto, 1984, p 53).

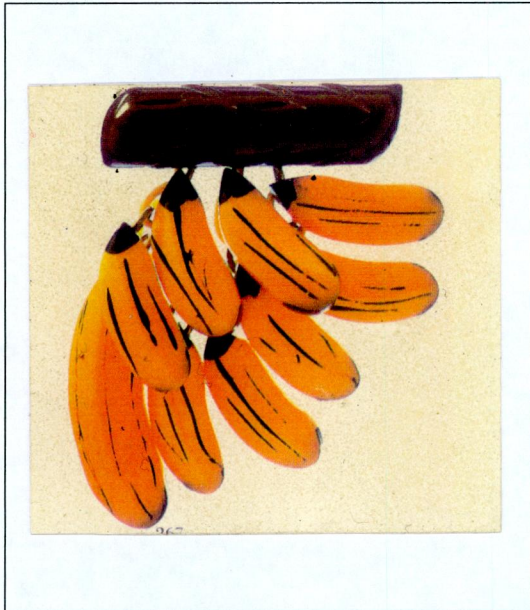
Cera points out that novelty jewellery was inexpensive, providing a hint of humour about untraditional subjects, naive and odd, smart rather than pretty. It was, as a rule, stamped or handmade in plastic and all kinds of inexpensive materials, born of the easygoing, leisurely Californian spirit (Cera, 1992, p 150). It was sold in department stores and in five-and-dimes, available and affordable to a wide range of people.

Sun imagery was very important in the Depression, probably as a sign of optimism and hope; a new dawn which would bring freedom from want. Moon and stars, traditional vehicles for wishing on, also featured in jewellery designs.

In spite of, or, more probably because of, the general seriousness of the era, this Californian spirit of sun, sea and fun intruded on the cold Winter of the Depression and its jewellery. Florida was another sunny area of the States, and merchandising from this area, as popular now as when it originated in the 1930s, sentimentally evoked the aura of its warm optimism. Vintage tropical bird jewellery, featuring cranes, flamingoes, pelicans or gulls were branded Florida. Palms, sunbursts and fountains were other sunny motifs. Brightly coloured plastic fruit also suggested sun-ripening, appearing on brooches and pins, as well as hanging as charms from plastic bracelets and necklaces. (Illus. 16) Cera proposes that the reason why Americans preferred the novelty and affordable luxury of the superfluous in jewellery to antique wares, as in Europe, was the lack of family heirlooms and Crown jewels in this young country (Cera, 1992, p 149).

Mickey Mouse was the spirit of optimism that everybody wanted to take home during the Depression; at the same time Donald Duck expressed the frustrations people felt at the state of the nation. These two characters were leased to market everything from soap to toothpaste. In 1933, Ingersoll produced the first Mickey Mouse wristwatch, and two and a half million were sold within two years. By 1939 a mouse watch was so much a part of American mythology that one was sealed in the New York Fair time capsule (Heide, 1979, p 67). (Illus. 17)

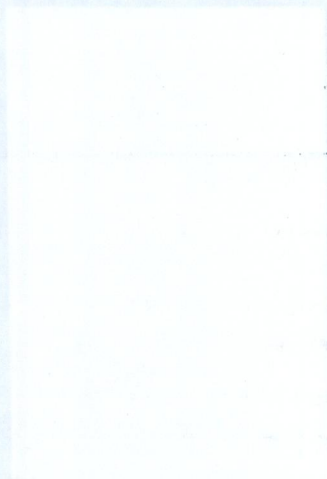
Other cartoon characters were very popular on children's novelty jewellery. Buck Rogers (symbolising the new, brighter future that mechanisation and technological progress could bring) and Little Orphan Annie appeared on

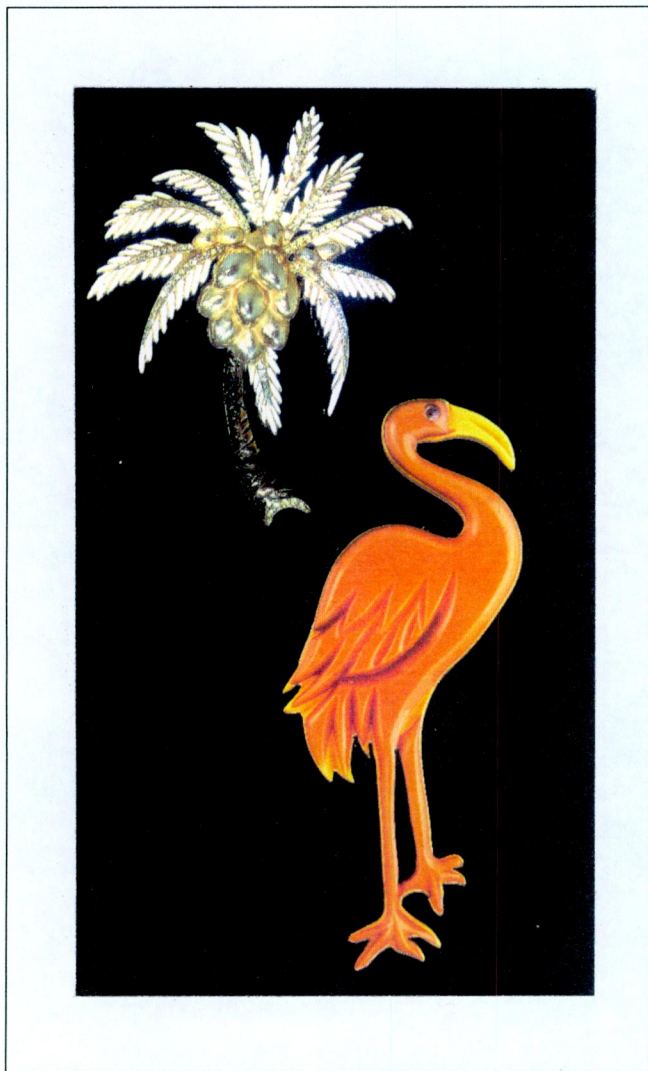


16(a) American manufactured brooch, yellow bakelite partly painted brown, ca 1930, private collection.



16(b) American manufactured brooch, gold-plated metal, partially painted with rhinestones, ca 1930, Rita Sachs collection.





16(c) [left] Calvaire, brooch, gold-plated metal, partially painted, ca 1940, private collection.

16(d) [right] American manufactured brooch, yellow and orange bakelite in two superimposed layers, mid-1930s, private collection.





17 Ingersoll, Mickey Mouse watch, chrome-plated wristband, 1933.



buttons, rings, badges and bracelets. Annie, more than anyone else, was a survivor of the chaos of the 1930s, and her unfailing belief that tomorrow would bring better times must have been an important factor in helping children through hard days.

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... or not, as the case may be. In 1936, with the coronation of Edward VIII, a Union Jack pin was made from plastic, and sold out completely. This could hardly have been further from American nationalism.

Narrative design, apart from its ability to amuse and to uplift, had the ability to communicate ideologies to a wide variety of people, in a very accessible medium. American nationalism was one of the beliefs propagated in jewellery.¹³ The American flag appeared on pins and hanging from chains; American sports and pastimes, were represented as well. (Illus. 18) American sailors and soldiers were featured as the decade ended and the spectre of war approached, and the bald eagle was depicted in rhinestones and cabochons.

The culture of the States was also reflected in jewellery; motifs such as cowboy covered wagons, Huckleberry Finn, and steamboats were all picked out in gems to be worn as pins. However, other, less attractive aspects of American culture were also appropriated for design purposes, such as racial oppression. Cowboy figures represented the fight against the Indians, and Indian pins were also made. Mexicans were made into colourful stereotypes, in cloaks and sombreros, and Blacks also maintained their subservient position, depicted on smokers' accessories as ignorant bartenders. Their African counterparts were also put in their places: Joseff's headhunter brooch, a black disembodied head with a ring through the nose and long, hanging chain earrings, was one of his most popular retail designs. (Illus. 19) This type of jewellery helped to foster ignorance of ethnic traditions, and it is unlikely that these types of racist jewellery were made in total ignorance of the fact that they were reinforcing negative ideologies.

The final area in which narrative accessories were important was souvenir merchandising for various fairs and exhibitions which took place in America in this period. The 1939 New York World's Fair was the last of these, and, some might say, the pinnacle of their achievements. It was compared to the Emerald City of Oz, where dreams come true, from *The Wizard of Oz*, released in 1939 as well; both were the ultimate in escapism.

Meikle, however, has a different view of the subject: he claims that by this time an exposition no longer served as a museum of contemporary civilisation, but as a vast, three-dimensional package for the consumerist way of life. This approach, he says, considered the average person only as a consumer, a passive individual receiving impulses, prodded, stimulated, and living packaged experiences. At the fair everything was streamlined, rounded off, and reduced to the lowest level of public comprehension.



18 Bakelite brooches and chain bracelet, ca 1930s.





19 Joseff, Headhunter brooches, ca 1930s, Joan Castle Joseff collection.
Publicity still showing Gail Patrick wearing an ivory version of the
brooch, 1941.



The official fair publications reflected this lack of content, there were no serious books produced, only merchandising and souvenir booklets (Meikle, 1979, p 199/200).

There was, indeed, a proliferation of merchandising. Various pavilions had their own souvenir pins, and every visitor received a Bakelite pin featuring the Trylon and Perisphere, two buildings which were also the mottoes of the fair, which featured on accessories. (Illus. 20) Meikle says that these were important metaphors of progress and control at a time when Europe seemed about to regress into the chaos of war. The needle-shaped Trylon represented limitless flight into the future, the squat, round Perisphere signified controlled stasis (Meikle, 1979, p 189). These two opposites epitomise the ideological dichotomies in every field which were at the core of American design, and indeed American existence, during the 1930s.

In jewellery, and general appearance, then, class distinctions were blurred in this period, possibly due to a developing social conscience among the rich, as women wore jewellery in the machine aesthetic style, which appeared almost identically in high and low class metalwork. Class boundaries were also transcended by women in all sections of society expressing their independence, as seen in the popularity of bold plastic jewellery. The excitement and glamour of these new ideals appeared in the equally glamorous new modern material — plastic. Bolder styles also coincided with the introduction of bigger cabochon stones into most areas of metal jewellery.

However, class aspirations still prevailed among many, who wanted the benefits of cheaper machine production but would not change their tastes to the modern style, preferring to maintain connections with the exclusive handcraft tradition, purchasing replicas of historical styles. Conservatism in high design was also a feature of Depression jewellery, probably due to considerations of economy, as historical revivals were less likely to go out of fashion. Economic hardship also led to the use of open spaces as a positive element in designs, as these spaces represented financial savings for the jeweller. Considerations of economy and historical nationalism coincided with the popularity of dual-purpose items, such as the double clip brooch, a particular favourite among all social classes. Nationalist sentiments sparked off a return to the American past, led by a spate of Hollywood historical films.

Floral styles were one manifestation of this historicism, and these also suggested the sense of romance which women wished for in their lives, but felt was lacking in the hard times of the 1930s. Cheery, spirit-lifting imagery was most important in the Depression, and figurative costume jewellery was the main vehicle for this sentiment. Figurative, toylike and



20 Exhibition souvenirs from the New York World's Fair, 1939, photograph JR Eyerman.



childlike imagery was also an expression of freedom from the sophistication and abstraction prevalent in Europe at that time.

Representational jewellery also carried patriotic messages, in themes of national culture and pride, especially as the spectre of war in Europe drew nearer. This prospect of war led to increased escapism from the realities of life, climaxing in the wonderland of the 1939 New York World's Fair. This exhibition drew together all these various trends in jewellery and accessories (among other areas), summing them up for the public as the country faced the new decade.

Conclusion

I am aware that any conclusions I may draw on this subject, from the case study I have completed, are not general truths, but may apply only to this period. However, certain facts within this study are worthy of note.

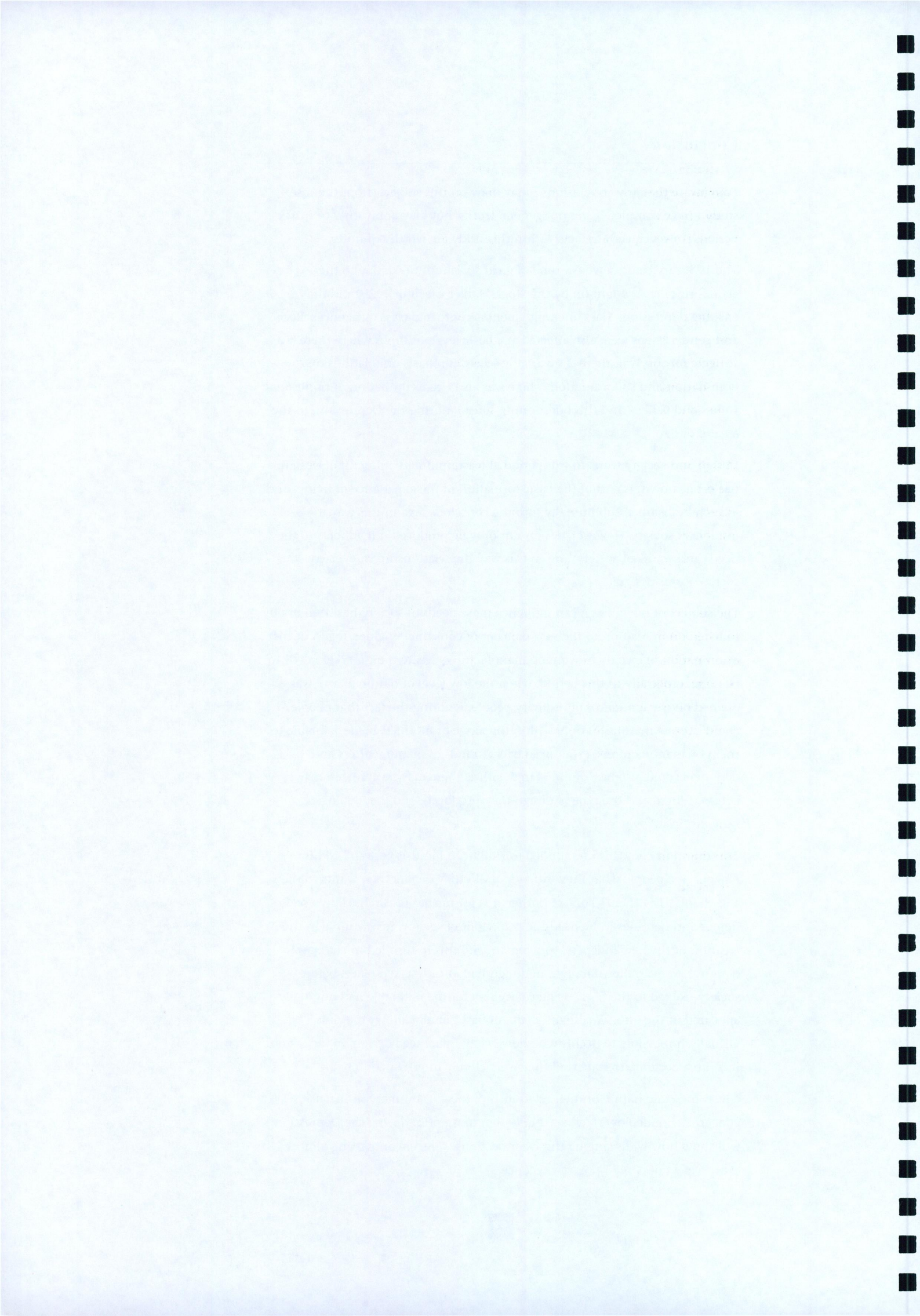
The 1930s in America were a time of great social upheaval, due to the economic crisis brought on by the Stock Market Crash of 1929, and the ensuing depression. Mass unemployment accentuated class differences. Race and gender issues were also affected at a basic level; in times where there is a struggle for survival, there is invariably a new emphasis on relations of domination and subordination. There was also a re-examination of traditional values and beliefs, and this questioning spread, during the Depression, to the area of design.

Design and society were, in this period at least, mutually influential. Design, as has been shown, is part of the basic formation of the experience of living, and as such is absorbed subliminally into the consciousness. In this way it influences society. However, design can only be produced if it adheres to the needs and wants of society, and in this way the relationship is reversed — society forms design.

The subject of how design can influence these needs of society has been briefly touched on in relation to the new concept of consumer engineering. A deeper examination of exactly how much manufacturers create their market needs to be done, especially in this period, when the low level of national taste was blamed on the ignorance of ordinary people, ignoring the fact that people could express their tastes only within the range of products made available to them by manufacturers. (The social backgrounds of manufacturers and designers could also be examined in detail, as there may be connections between these and the type of design they produced, and the ideologies inherent in it.)

This question could also be applied to Hollywood in this period. Did film makers give people what they wanted, or did they dictate their wants to them, and then satisfy them? This is another area for further research. Hollywood heroes and heroines influenced the behaviour of society, for example in the creation of the new independent woman, and this in turn led to changes in design. However, these changes in design had already taken place, before society reacted to the films, as new jewellery for the new style had originally appeared in the film. This slightly circuitous argument shows that it is virtually impossible to decide whether society influenced design, or vice-versa. It is more accurate to state that they were closely intertwined.

Given the close nature of their relationship, then, a summary of social concerns and ideologies reflected in design in America during the Depression will show how wide-ranging these connections were, encompassing almost every aspect of contemporary existence.



The crisis of the Depression seems to have acted as a catalyst, polarising general public opinion on almost every subject. On every issue which could possibly concern them, Americans held very strong opinions — and these opinions usually tended towards either on extreme or the other. Everything was black or white — the Depression appeared to have obliterated any grey area. These polarised opinions appeared not only in ideas, but also in the more concrete form of design, as has been shown.

The new American cultural nationalism showed in jewellery design in an attempt to break away from the perceived European monopoly on culture. Hollywood-led historicism in design competed with the transformation of elite European modernism into a democratised, Americanised version of the style, in order to achieve and proclaim this independence from America's colonial parents.

This divergence of styles also represented the divergence of public opinion on the subject of the way out of the Depression — whether the solution lay in the old American way, and the Protestant work ethic, or instead in progress into the future, through the adoption of the machine and technology.

The machine was seen as the agent of democracy, breaking down class barriers, and mass-produced design would reflect this, although here again there was a choice of opposites — was standardisation to occur at a low level of design, making imitations of upper class (and usually European) models the norm, in direct contrast with the spirit of nationalism and independence, or would it occur at a high level, elevating the vernacular into the realm of high culture? It appears to me that this particular dilemma was never resolved, at least not in the 1930s. William Morris had also failed to resolve it in the 1850s — the reality was that quality designs were too expensive for the average consumer.

The new machine aesthetic expressed the power of the machine, not only to produce goods faster and better, but to propel the country into a more prosperous future. Rounded edges and smooth machined surfaces would minimise friction in this forward progress.

Historical styles were a backlash against this view, and their increasing popularity as the end of the decade approached showed the fears held by people about the new destructive possibilities of machines in the field of warfare. Historicism was an escapist retreat from the reality of rearmament — not only jewellery, but cinema too, withdrew further and further into the past to find a sense of hope and security.

Changing gender roles encouraged the production of jewellery aimed at women, rather than men, as the symbolism of jewellery gradually moved from being a token of possession given by a man to a woman, to being a symbol of a woman's own tastes and independence, as she purchased her jewellery

herself. This also changed the emphasis from precious jewellery to costume and novelty jewellery, as women sought to raise their spirits with some throwaway frivolity during the dark days of the Depression.

This novelty jewellery, however, often in a narrative or representational idiom, had functions other than merely spreading good cheer. American culture was well represented; sport, literature, patriotic emblems and the old West featured prominently; but more negative aspects of this culture, such as racism, were reinforced by the stereotypical depictions of ethnic minorities in jewellery and accessories. These designs coexisted with an opposing stylistic trend — the Harlem Renaissance brought a new awareness of, and respect for, African-American art. Here, again, Americans held either one view or the other — there was no middle ground.

Hollywood was the main display arena for jewellery — huge cinema attendances meant that the silver screen was more influential than museums or retail outlets in popularising and contextualising new styles. However the Depression-era principles of economy and simplification in design did not apply in Hollywood, where everything had to be larger-than-life — another example of opposing trends in American life. The contrast between Hollywood and reality led to a sense of dissatisfaction, which fuelled a growing consumerist ethic. Spiralling aspirations and rapid style changes were carefully monitored by manufacturers to ensure that increased purchasing would pull the economy slowly out of recession.

The emphasis on economy in design and production, which was so much a part of the Depression, led to new styles and the use of new materials, as well as the appropriation of old materials for use in new ways. Plastic jewellery developed into a chunky, bright but minimalist expression. Rhinestones, cabochon stones and new metal plating techniques engendered new, bolder, but cheaper jewellery for evening-wear, regardless of whether the style was modernist or historicist. A new range of combination pieces was also introduced to cater for reduced budgets, and items which could be reproduced in various colours of metals and stones, but reusing old moulds, such as flower brooches, were very popular with manufacturers.

These trends were also reflected in precious jewellery, the main difference being the substitution of expensive materials for cheap ones. As the two were almost indistinguishable at a glance, there was a great democracy of design, wiping out class divisions, at least on a superficial level. A growing social conscience meant that, for once, the rich did not desire to differentiate themselves noticeably from the masses in wearing ostentatious jewellery.

The importance of jewellery, accessories, and a good appearance, in order to maintain an optimistic attitude in the Depression, cannot be overestimated. The fact that the industry survived the 1930s so successfully shows what a high priority personal appearance was to Americans. Jewellery also had a

crucial function as a means of creating a positive sense of identity for people who must have felt anonymous and marginalised in this time of mass unemployment and poverty.

While I have shown the connections between society and design in this discussion, I believe that it has also shown the merits of studying design in its social context, acknowledging that while aesthetic value may be persistent in design, design itself is historically located and ideologically produced. Thus in this period, personal adornment in its various forms was a visual manifestation of the dichotomies within all the major ideological concerns of this society.

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