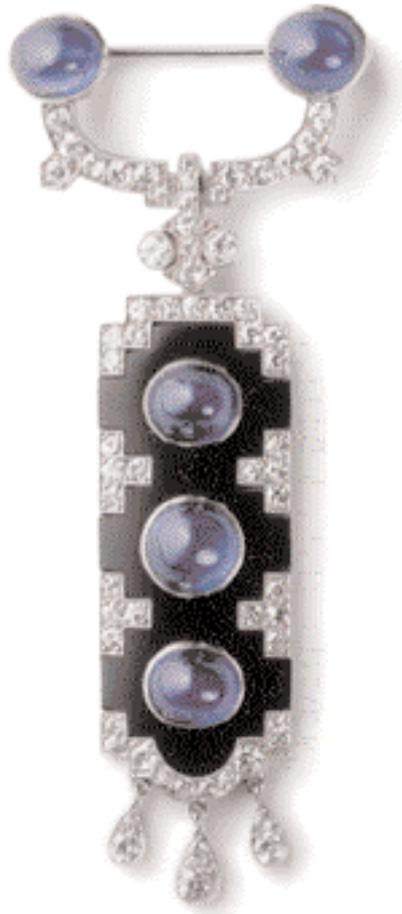


MASTERPIECES OF AMERICAN JEWELLERY

Masterpieces of American Jewellery, the first museum exhibition to focus exclusively on America's jewellery heritage, will be on display at the Gilbert Collection, Somerset House, London, from 15th February to 12th June 2005. The 200 pieces on show range from the late eighteenth century to the 1990s and were all designed, manufactured and distributed in the United States. The inaugural exhibition of The National Jewelry Institute, it was first staged at The American Folk Art Museum, New York. *Masterpieces of American Jewellery* highlights the creativity, craftsmanship and excellence of design found in American jewellery and explores five major themes: Americana, Nature, Humour, Pastimes and High Style.

Americana is exemplified by a brooch set with diamonds, sapphires and rubies depicting the American flag. Charles Tiffany, together with John Young, formed a jewellery business in 1837 and the 'star spangled banner' in the exhibition was made in New York in 1900 by Tiffany & Co. It is exquisitely made, the flag rippling in the wind with diamond tassels flying behind, while in 1927 the New York branch of Cartier made an elegant brooch with the flag stylised into the form of a bow-tie.

A number of pieces in the Americana section commemorate such great events as Wilbur Wright's 1909 flight over New York, the 1939 New York World Fair and the suffragette movement. America's fascination with technology and its no-nonsense approach to life can be seen in a pair of gold cufflinks designed in 1940 as nuts and bolts by Paul Flato, the



Sapphire and Diamond Pendant Brooch, Cartier, New York, 1920. Platinum, cabochon sapphires, diamonds and black onyx plaques. 7cm x 2.9cm.

darling of the Hollywood and café society sets. *Nature*. Inspired by exotic flora, American jewellers gave free rein to their imagination and this theme remains popular today. In 1889 Tiffany & Co. displayed twenty-five exceptional and botanically accurate diamond, enamel and gold brooches by Paulding Farnham at the Paris World Fair. All were sold by the second day, many to the railroad baron Jay Gould. Six of these breathtaking creations, each representing a different variety of orchid, are on view. Marcus & Co. also created remarkable pieces such as the brooch of enamel and yellow gold of two irises which appear translucent when held up to the light, 1900, and an exquisite ruby, diamond, gold and enamel lily flower brooch, 1930. The Duchess of Windsor reinforced this passion for nature: when she wore a flower brooch, everyone wanted one.

American jewellery design has always had a witty streak, evidenced by the *Humour* sec-

tion. In the 1930s, Walt Disney went into partnership with Cartier to create a series of enamelled charm bracelets representing some of his animated characters. Another jeweller influenced by Disney was Raymond C. Yard. A group of his whimsical Bunny Pins made from diamonds, sapphires, rubies and emeralds will be exhibited, each depicting a rabbit either fishing, dressed as a soldier, a waiter, as a bride or a yacht owner at his boat wheel and pretending to ride. The bunny appears again with the Bunny Bangle created by the artist Daniel Brush. Exhibited at the Smithsonian Institute in 1987, the bangle is made of 1940s Bakelite and gold, surmounted by a rabbit's head of pink diamonds and ruby eyes. Donald Claflin of Tiffany looked to Lewis Carroll for inspiration for his walrus brooch of 1965 made of platinum, enamel, gold, diamond and ivory. Major artists frequently design jewellery and an extraordinary example is the tiara and necklace made in brass, commissioned from Alexander Calder in the 1950s by Sir Kenneth (later Lord) Clark for his wife. The jewelled sculptures of a stallion and mare were commissioned by the American heiress Barbara Hutton from the well-known animal sculptor Herbert Haseltine, who completed this three-year project in 1949 and drew his inspiration from India. The gold horses' heads and necks are carapaced with rubies, sapphires, emeralds, diamonds and oriental pearls and stand 38.1 cm high on rock crystal bases.



Crown of Thorns Brooch, Jean Schlumberger, 1947. Morganite, diamonds and 18 carat gold. 8.3cm x 6.4cm.



Walrus Brooch, Donald Claflin, Tiffany & Co., New York, 1965. Platinum, enamel, 18 carat gold, doamonds and ivory. 7cm x 4.5cm.



Jewelled Lily Flower brooch, Marcus & Co., New York, 1930. Rubies, diamonds, gold and enamel. 8cm x 5.5cm.



"Nuts & Bolts" Cufflinks, Paul Flato, New York, 1930. 2cm x 1cm.



Necklace, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Tiffany & Co., New York, 1918. 71cm x 9.5 cm.

The *Pastimes* section shows how Americans wanted jewellery that reflected their leisure interests, whether they were sporting activities (fishing, sailing, racing and hunting) or cultural (ballet). Claude Arpels's friendship with the famous choreographer George Balanchine led Van Cleef & Arpels to create a series of exquisite jewelled, rose-cut diamond, platinum and gold ballerinas, inspired by the great dancer Anna Pavlova.

High society and Hollywood stars alike commissioned and wore stunning pieces of jewellery, examples of which make up the *High Style* section. Cole Porter commissioned Paul Flato in 1940 to make a dazzling aquamarine and ruby belt buckle necklace for his wife Linda while Joan Crawford favoured pieces by Raymond C. Yard such as her elegant 1935 diamond and platinum bracelet. Major pieces by Tiffany, Marcus & Co., Cartier, Paul Flato, Van Cleef & Arpels and Harry Winston, dating from the turn of the century to the 1990s, will be on show. Amongst the most extraordinary is a Crown of Thorns brooch designed by Jean Schlumberger in 1947 for Millicent Rogers, the Standard Oil heiress, in morganite, diamonds and gold, and the gold cuffs made by Van Cleef & Arpels for Jackie Kennedy Onassis. The two most recent pieces in the exhibition are a glittering blue butterfly of Montana sapphires, diamonds, silver and gold by Joel Arthur Rosenthal (JAR), circa 1987, and a Tahitian aubergine-coloured pearl necklace with a diamond and pearl clasp by Assael International from the 1990s.

This is the second major exhibition of jewellery to be staged at the Gilbert Collection, following *Jewels of JAR* two years ago which attracted some 50,000 visitors.



Jewelled Ballerina brooch, Van Cleef & Arpels, New York, 1946. Sapphires, diamonds and platinum. 7.2cm x 7cm.

Opening hours:

Gilbert Collection, Somerset House, London. Open daily from 15th February to 12th June 2005: 10.00 am to 6.00 pm, (last admission 5.15 pm).

Admission:

Adult: £5.00 (Concessions: £4.00)
 Under 18s, UK full-time students, unemployed, disabled helpers and Friends of the Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery: free
 Annual ticket: £20.
 Joint ticket with Hermitage Rooms or Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery: £8.00 (£7.00).
 Joint ticket with both Hermitage Rooms and Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery: £12.00 (£11.00).

The lavishly illustrated companion publication by Judith Price, President of the National Jewelry Institute, is published by Running Press, ISBN 0-7624-2118-5, £20.

For information about educational events tel. 0207 420 9406, email: education@somerset-house.org.uk or visit: www.somerset-house.org.uk.

The National Jewelry Institute was established in 2002 as a non-profit organisation whose mission is the preservation of and education about fine jewellery. It also fosters and supports the training of students studying the jewellery trade, including sponsored apprenticeships, in order to help them learn the exacting techniques of fine jewellery craftsmanship and to perpetuate the integrity of this important artistic tradition.



Watch celebrating Wilbur Wright's flight over New York on 30th September 1909. Signed 'LM', 1910. 18 carat gold. 6cm x 4.5cm.