



### At Art Fair, Jewelry Is More Than the Sum of Its Gems

By MADONN LARAGIONE  
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PARIS — Impervious to global economic crises and rising gold and diamond prices, the market for fine jewelry, old or new, is soaring. The \$196.8 million raised in the sale of the Elizabeth Taylor collection at Christie's in New York last December put jewelers in a jollid mood.

Some of that buzz is likely to be in the air in the small Dutch city of Maastricht this week, when more than 75,000 collectors, customers, connoisseurs, artists and advisers will be celebrating the 25th edition of the European Fine Art fair, known as Tefaf.

On view through Sunday will be more than 30,000 artworks, including contemporary and antique jewelry.

Despite those numbers, it is a highly exclusive affair: not everyone can be part of the show.

"It is very difficult to join the fair in any section, including jewelry," Marlijn Akkerman, spokeswoman for the jewelry vetting committee, said by telephone from Amsterdam.

"Inside the quality standards of the fair, all jewelry on offer here must be in the 'best interest' of the fair."

Exhibits — including those of the five contemporary jewelry designers Buccellati, Graff, Hemmerle, Chopard and Otto Jakob, and 17 dealers in antique jewelry — must meet approved standards of artistic quality, authenticity, condition and value.

"Dealers are required to select only their most important pieces," Mr. Akkerman said, those "with a solid provenance, instant recognizability, and value above a certain threshold."

Graff, the London-based jeweler best known for the rarity and quality of its stones, embarked this year on the challenge of creating its first multifunctional piece — introduced at Tefaf.

For the piece, Graff has chosen a 106.15-carat, D color, internally flawless heart-shaped diamond. A simple mechanism allows the stone to serve as the removable center of a cuff bracelet or a ring.

The design of the cuff was inspired by material in the Graff archive, but revivited by the company founder, Laurence Graff, the company said.

"Innovation within a tradition of excellence is a philosophy which resonates strongly at Graff," Mr. Graff said recently by e-mail. "It is important to innovate and create, all the while maintaining a sense of traditional craftsmanship using the finest quality stones."

For the family-owned Munich jeweler Hemmerle, "Tefaf is the high point of our calendar and has been for the past 17 years," the designer Christian Hemmerle said. "It is where we connect with most of our international clientele."

Known for its craftsmanship since 1862, when it made medals and ornaments for the Bavarian Court, Hemmerle produces only one-of-a-kind pieces.

This year, to celebrate the fair's silver jubilee, Hemmerle is showing a bangle borrowed from a collector who purchased it 25 years ago, alongside a bangle from this year's collection, to highlight the evolution of the house's philosophy and its aesthetics.

"People realize today that, in a world of readily available goods, reductionist design and pure form are more attractive," Mr. Hemmerle said.

The first bangle, which is not for sale, features yellow and white diamonds set in yellow and white gold, reminiscent of an opulence in vogue in the 1930s.

The newer bangle, in contrast, evokes an understated sense of luxury and an organic feel with its olive wood core, and white and brown diamonds set in copper.

"Less can be more, especially where there is craftsmanship and individuality," Mr. Hemmerle said.

The company is also introducing earrings from its new Egyptian-inspired line, a collection that evokes the birthplace of Mr. Hemmerle's wife, Yasmine.

Tefaf is primarily an art fair and exhibits are required to possess artistic value, not simply be a gem in a basic setting. The idea is to show the creative talent and technical prowess of the designer.

That objective explains the presence of Otto Jakob, a small independent brand that produces about 200 pieces a year out of an atelier of just 20 goldsmiths in Karlsruhe, in southwestern Germany.

Mr. Jakob, a self-taught jewelry designer, was once a student of the German neo-expressionist painter and sculptor Georg Baselitz. For his jewelry work, "books and museums were my only teachers," he said.

He likes to design abstract forms that he works into three-dimensional sculptures, so that his pieces can be worn in a variety of ways, with no predefined front or back. "The notion of contrast is worked into every piece," he said, "so you can wear the piece according to how you feel."

Mr. Jakob's pieces are either unique or made in very limited editions. In part by choice, but also because they require work that cannot be duplicated in unlimited series, like complex enameling or gold work.

Mr. Jakob's "Tassia" pendant, a double-sided piece set with micro-pavé diamonds and black enamel on one side and damascened gold filigree with rock crystal beads on the other, exemplifies that work.

Outside Tefaf, Mr. Jakob sells directly from his studio in Karlsruhe or through the art gallery Daniel Blau in London.

"Clients who buy my pieces are art collectors," Mr. Jakob said. "They do not buy to impress their friends but to enrich their collections."

His inspiration comes from what he calls non-European sources, mainly ancient artworks from China, India or Indonesia. "My pieces are of a certain spiritual quality that you could not achieve with unlimited series," he said. "The intensity that goes into making each piece Mr. Jakob's "Tassia" pendant, a double-sided piece set with micro-pavé diamonds and black enamel on one side and damascened gold filigree with rock crystal beads on the other, exemplifies that work.

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Work by another original designer, René Lalique, is being shown by the Brussels-based dealer, Epoque Fine Jewels. His rare Art Nouveau pendant, circa 1905, depicts four dragonflies made of gold, enamel, plique-à-jour enamel, aquamarine and diamond on a red and-link enamelled gold chain.

Highly collectible, the piece comes with a notable provenance. According to the fair catalogue, it was purchased directly from Mr. Lalique by the glassmaker Léon Appert, the husband of Marie Berthe Seurat, whose brother was the painter Georges Seurat.

S.J. Shrubsole, a dealer based in New York, is showing a piece from another pioneer in the history of jewelry design, René Boivin. The piece, a chrysé and demantoid-garnet flower brooch from 1930, was probably the work of Juliette Moutard, a renowned designer employed by Jeanne Boivin when she took over the running of the Boivin workshops after the death of her husband.

"Ms. Moutard was known in Boivin's atelier as 'Raphaël,' for the marvelous artistic talent that she placed in the service of jewelry-making," Emmanuelle Chassard, an expert in Boivin jewelry, said. "Boivin pieces are quite rare today because many were lost or melted down over the years."

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