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— Art Media Agency —

NEWSLETTER

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10 May 2023





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GemGenève
Booth A30



IsabelleFa

MAITRES CHAINISTES





Vase and orchids rockcrystal
Courtesy Henn. GemGenève

AMA

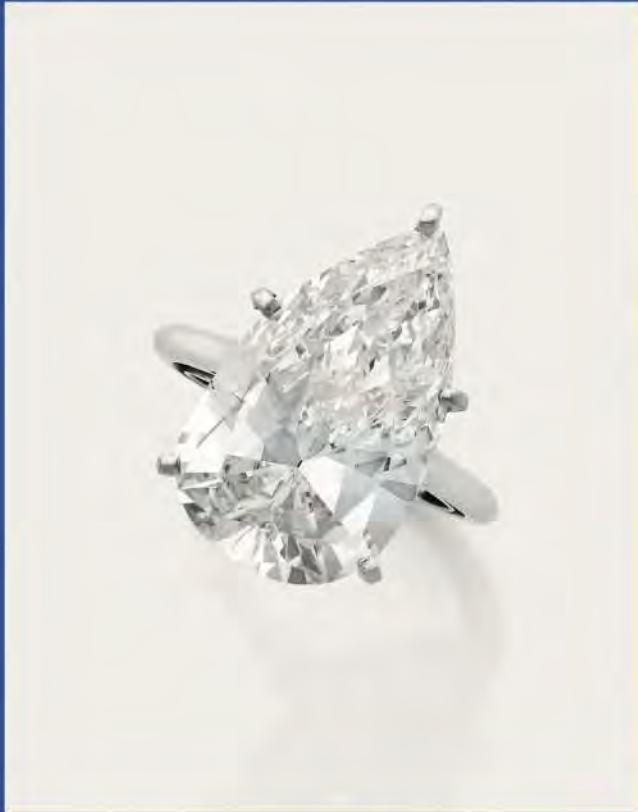
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VAN CLEEF & ARPELS
A sapphire, diamond and platinum bracelet, circa 1925
Estimate: €25,000 - 30,000



A 8.44 ct pear-shaped diamond and platinum ring
LFG certificate : I color, VVS2 clarity, no fluo,
type IIa
Estimate: €60,000 - 80,000



MAUBOUSSIN
A diamond, carved emerald, gold and
platinum Art Deco brooch, circa 1930
Estimate: €20,000 - 30,000

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Pocket watch with repeater and
music feature (c.1820-30), Pignet and Meylan

Photo André Longchamp. Courtesy Musée d'Art et d'Histoire. GemGenève

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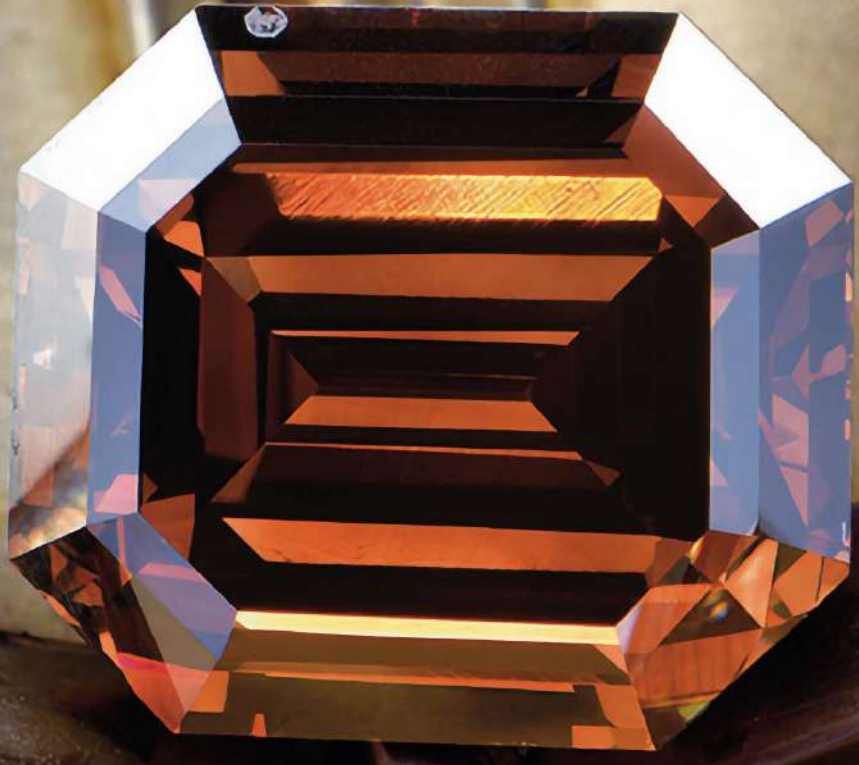
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Courtesy Poli Trading, GemGenève



GEMGENÈVE MAY 2023 THE AGE OF REASON

The elite of jewellery is here. For its 6th edition, GemGenève takes over Palexpo's Hall 1 from 11 to 14 May 2023 with 187 dealers of beautiful stones. It will also feature a rich cultural programme.

This young fair has reached cruising speed. Becoming more professional with each edition, it now welcomes 210 exhibitors, including 187 dealers from all over the world. Schools, designers, laboratories, museums and cultural institutions are all part of the show. The biennial event, which takes place each autumn in November and each spring in May, has built up a fine reputation since its creation in 2018 and is now a fixture in the international jewellery fair calendar. This is a source of pride for its founding fathers, Ronny Totah and Thomas Faerber, whose motto is "a fair designed by exhibitors for exhibitors".

Organised during Geneva Luxury Week, which brings together major auctions and cultural events, GemGenève celebrates the exceptional know-how and creativity surrounding fine jewellery, watches and precious stones. Thanks to the diversity of the gems exhibited, GemGenève functions as a hub dedicated to the world of diamonds, coloured stones, pearls, antique and contemporary jewellery, while giving pride of place to recognised designers, emerging talents, schools and young creators. As an event, it is highly prized by the multiple players in the field, whether they are designers, gemstone dealers, retailers, collectors, connoisseurs, professional buyers — or simply lovers of beautiful things, for jewellery fairs open to the public are rare and remain for the most part trade events, hence the growing importance of the cultural programme of this young fair.

The last edition in November recorded the event's best attendance to date with more than 3,500 visitors, "which corresponds to more than 5,000 visits, because people come back several

times, which means that the event is popular and that is a great satisfaction", confides Mathieu Dekeukelaire, the director of GemGenève. It is far from the figures of the big international fairs, but this modest dimension guarantees "a family state of mind" that the organisers are keen on.

"For this spring edition, the scenography, redesigned from top to bottom, will be resolutely plant-based and organic in order to welcome visitors in soft tones such as beige, white, green and blue evoking the colours of nature", explains Thomas Faerber on the subject of the layout of Hall 1 of Palexpo and its 13,000 m². After having occupied Hall 7 and Hall 6 during its five previous editions, GemGenève is moving to the neighbouring space. But a new hall means a new spatial layout for the show. For the third time in five years, the organisers have had to reimagine the exhibition space, visitor circulation and the main entrance in order to optimise the space available and to showcase the exhibitors. The latter will be distributed around four coffee station-style spaces, two main

Special events

Katerina Perez's 10th anniversary

Katerina Perez, an international influencer and jewellery expert known for her commitment and knowledge of jewellery, is celebrating ten years in the jewellery business this year [see p.68]. To mark the occasion, a unique conference has been organised at GemGenève, tracing the evolution of the jewellery market over the last ten years. It will address themes such as the positioning of the major houses, new forms of selling and buying, and the advent of a new generation of collectors...

Conferences and seminars

The GemGenève conferences offer visitors a new vision of gemmology and jewellery by allowing them to discuss with renowned experts in their field and to access insider knowledge. Good to know: all the conferences, podcasts and publications are available online free of charge.

GemGenève and literature

Pursuing its desire to highlight all the arts related to jewellery, GemGenève will once again host the Gem Collectors Bookshop, a space presenting a selection of old and rare books proposed by Herbert Horovitz and Christophe Dubois. For its part, the Bernard Letu bookshop will once again present collections of exclusive works on the art of jewellery. The whole will be integrated into a lounge area and will welcome well-known authors, invited by GemGenève to sign their books on jewellery. Among them are Joanna Hardy and her beautiful book *Sapphire* [see p.36], Anna Tabakhova for *Le fermoir en bijouterie* and Melanie Grant for *Coveted*.

Designer Vivarium brings together international designers spotted and selected by Vivienne Becker, the art and jewellery historian and journalist who has been present at GemGenève since its first edition. Her sharp eye spots talent that has remained "under the radar". Launched at the initiative of Olga Oleksenko in May 2022 in reaction to the war in Ukraine, and supported by the co-founders of GemGenève, the Strong and Precious – Ukrainian Jewellers project will be back at the fair. It will once again showcase the creations of Ukrainian designers in support of the country's contemporary scene. The Gem Museum, Singapore will also return and take over the space of the Knowledge Village, presenting an exhibition of precious stones and scientific awareness workshops. Manipulations, observations, discoveries... a space to discover all the wonders of gems.

Grand talks

In the continuity of the round tables, seminars and conferences organised by GemGenève to debate current issues, the show is launching a concept of Grand Talks for this May 2023 edition. Through a series of live interviews conducted by journalists, historians or renowned consultants, personalities from the world of jewellery — including influencers, artistic directors and heritage directors — will be invited to present their vision of the jewellery market and its evolution, both past and future.

Luxury, culture and science

Many new features are also planned for this spring edition. The Villa des Arts Perdus [see p.42] is intended to highlight the less visible professions in the world of jewellery, bringing together representatives of these little-known crafts to talk about their passion in a collaborative space open to the general public where meetings, demonstrations and exhibitions of pieces follow one another. It is an opportunity to reveal the hidden facets of jewellery and watchmaking and, perhaps, to arouse new vocations.

Another novelty: the outline of a future gemmology think tank is taking shape at GemGenève [see p.62]. The Association Gemmologie & Francophonie is organising a first working session bringing together professionals to debate the challenges of their professions, discussions that will be extended during future editions of GemGenève and in the association's brand new magazine, *Gemmes*. On Friday 12 May, the first working session will deal with the thorny

avenues and a lounge integrating exhibition spaces, projects, literary life and musical afterworks," describes Ronny Totah. Yes, this year music will be integrated into the event for the first time, according to a concept devised by Mathieu Dekeukelaire, our director.

Room for young talent

Under the aegis of Nadège Totah [see p.20], the Emerging Talents and New Designers spaces that make up the Designers' Village, are dedicated to the talents of the new generation

and offer them unprecedented visibility. Among the latest discoveries is Belgian jewellery artist Fred Fa, who creates all his sketches, technical drawings and gouache drawings by hand. Another talented designer is Hong Kong's Austy Lee, a former graphic artist turned designer who creates bold, psychedelic, sculptural and intricate jewellery. The inspirations and styles of Austy Lee's collections come from an eclectic mix of themes, ranging from pop-punk and avant-garde to religion, antiquity and fashion. A little further on, the



The Return of Ulysses

© Magali Dougados. Courtesy Grand Théâtre de Genève, GemGenève



Buccellati bracclet

Courtesy J.S. Fearnley, GemGenève

“We place as much emphasis on gemstones, jewellery design and jewellery making as we do on creating a real solidarity between the international community of gemstone and antique jewellery dealers, designers and jewellery enthusiasts.

— *Thomas Faerber*

subject of “What is sustainability in jewellery?” This session will be followed by a public lecture on the issue of sourcing.

Ecology and sustainability are at the heart of many discussions in the world of contemporary jewellery. “Making the invisible visible” is a project that aims to support associations fighting to protect the environment by making invisible pollution visible through jewellery. Each collection will be associated with an association fighting against a particular pollution, with a part of the turnover to be given as a donation to support its activity. For the launch, Tiffany Bähler [see p.48], founder of the brand, has chosen to focus on the plastic pellets that flood the beaches of the Atlantic, river waters and even Lake Geneva.

Also in music, piano afterworks are planned throughout the show. A partnership set up with the Grand Théâtre de Genève and the Haute École de Musique de Genève (HEM) will enable young talents from both institutions to play musical interludes at the end of the day.

Prizes and more prizes

Since its launch, training has been one of the main focuses of GemGenève. Over the years, the organisers have increased the number of partnerships with Swiss schools. This is a way for the founders to pass on the baton to future generations. This collaboration with schools is expressed through competitions. For this May 2023 edition, four prizes will again be awarded: the Public Prize for the

the viability of the future. Students from three schools — the École Technique de la Vallée de Joux (ETVJ), the Centre de Formation Professionnelle Arts (CFP Arts de Genève) and the Centre de Formation Professionnelle Neuchâtelois (CPNE) with its Pôle Arts Appliqués — will be asked to work on this quote from Lavoisier. In addition, they will be asked to imagine, according to the stones they receive, a project for the creation of jewellery or ornaments expressing their thoughts on the theme defined by their design. This year, the exhibitor Fuli Gemstones will provide the students with peridots (olive-coloured gemstones), whose original cut will be presented during the competition.

“GemGenève, the new generation of trade shows, wishes to remain a human-sized show with a family character. It is a true meeting place for professionals and jewellery enthusiasts, and to date has no equivalent.

— *Ronny Tórah*

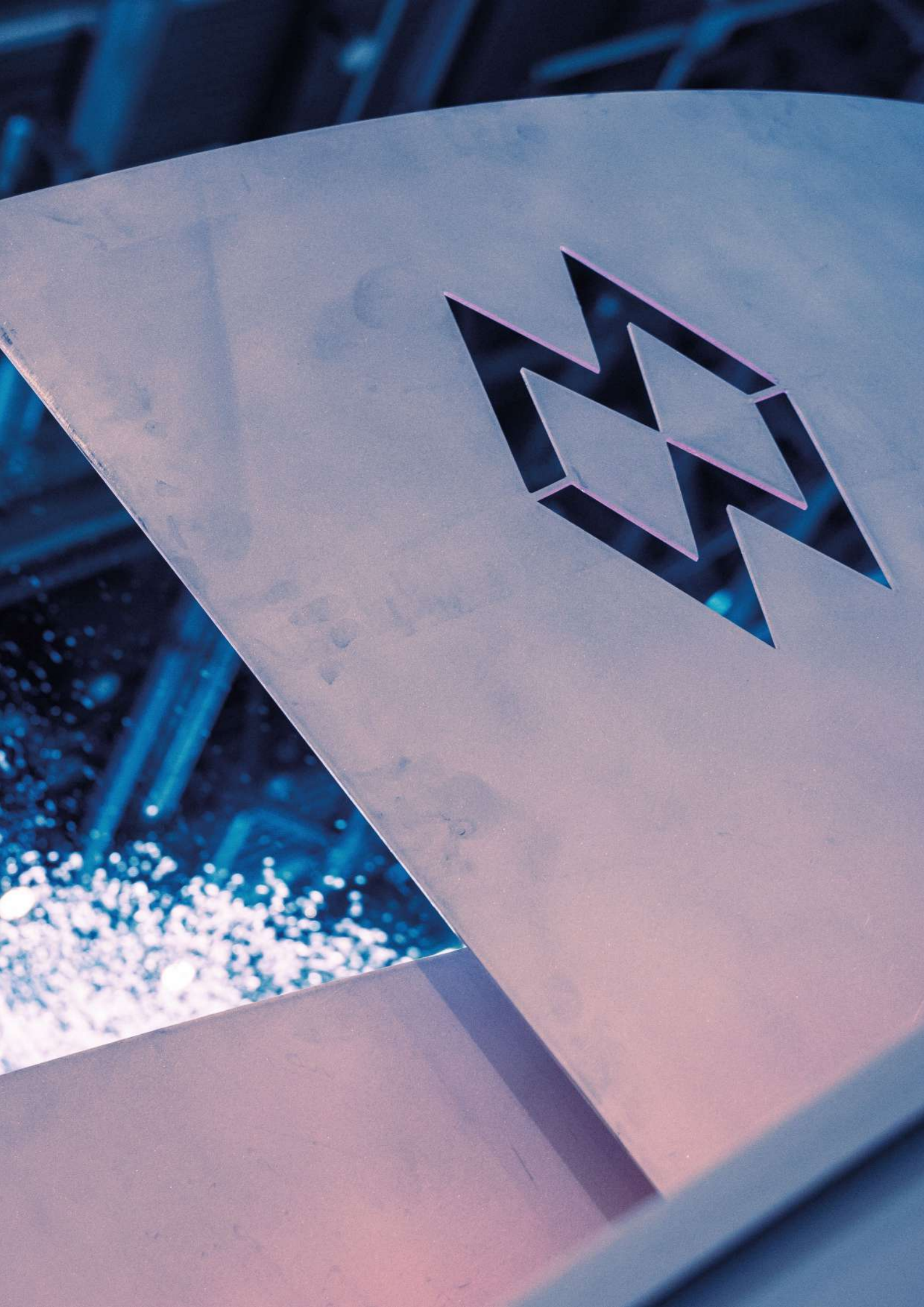
In the wake of the last two exhibitions organised at GemGenève, “Fabulous Carl Fabergé” and “Micromosaics through the ages”, the organisers of GemGenève wish to promote the jewellery heritage and all the crafts and arts related to it by offering recognised museum institutions visibility within the show’s cultural programme. This year, with the Geneva Museum of Art and History, the show is organising an exhibition on automaton mechanisms, art objects and music. Public demonstrations of some of the automata will be scheduled daily throughout the show. Marvels of precision and enchantment [see p.54].

CFC project, the ASMEBI Prize for the CFC project, the Public Prize for the HEAD × Grand Théâtre de Genève × GemGenève project, and the Éric Horovitz Foundation Prize for the CFC project.

The first is a gouache competition organised with the Schools leading to the Federal Certificate of Competence on the theme “Nothing is lost, everything is transformed”. Circular economy, sustainable development, non-waste, recycling, reuse, transmission... all terms that refer to the need to meet the needs of the present while anticipating

The tripartite collaboration initiated in 2020 by the Geneva theatre HEAD and the exhibition continues. For this May 2023 edition, HEAD students will have to create jewellery pieces inspired by the costumes of Claudio Monteverdi’s opera, *The Return of Ulysses*, created in 1640 and whose performances will take place at the Grand Théâtre de Genève between 27 February and 5 March 2023. The 2nd year students in Product Design, Jewellery and Accessories at HEAD will be invited to reflect on the musical revolution of the Baroque style in the 17th century, and on the representations of allegories (Time, The Human Tragedy, Fortune, Love, etc.).





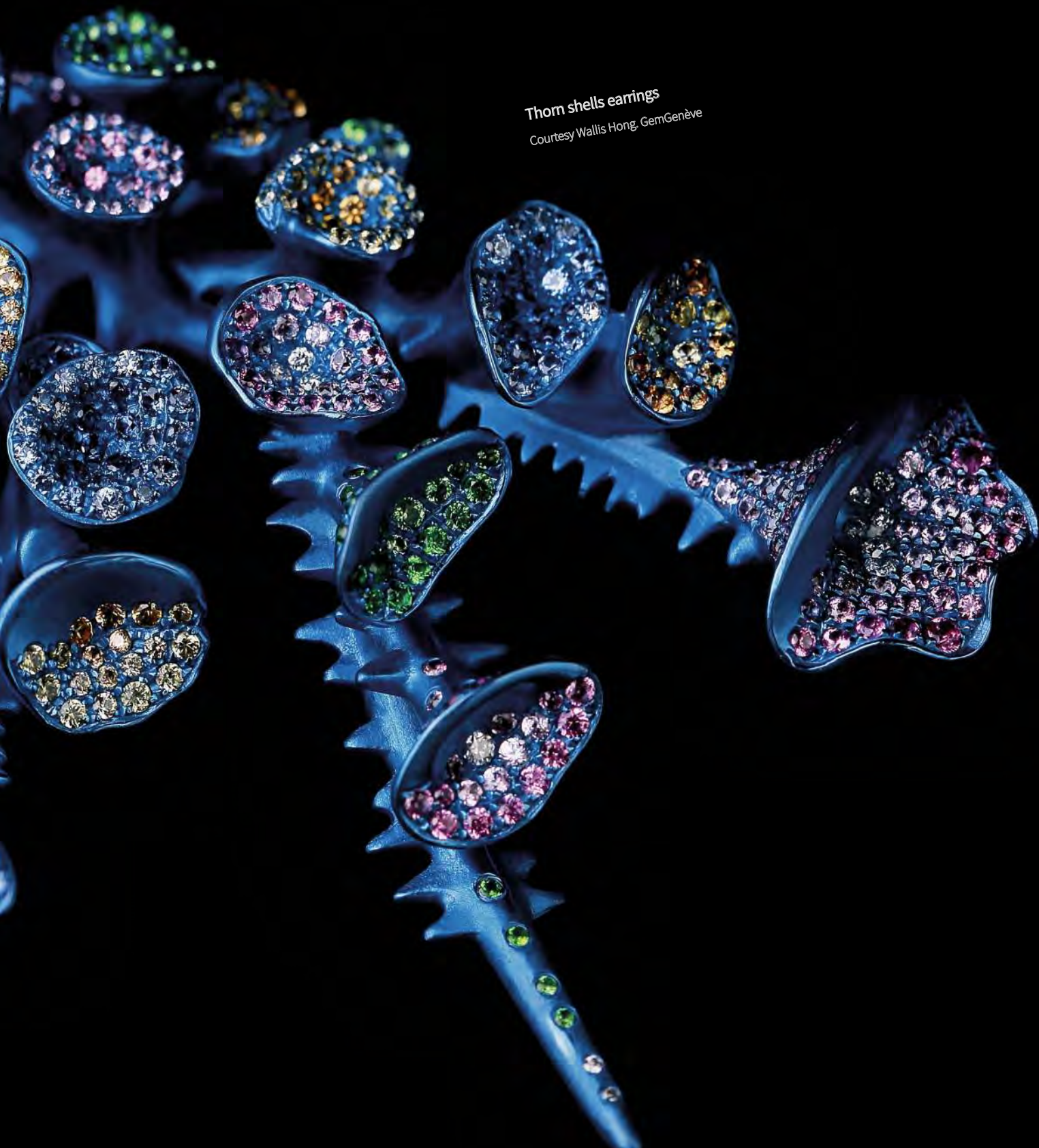
EVENT

The Éric Horovitz Foundation prize is awarded to a student who has participated in the CFC project. The student will be offered personalised support according to his/her professional project (training, assistance in finding an internship or a job, purchase of equipment). Founded in 2020 by Christine Horovitz in memory of her husband, the Foundation's mission is to support young Swiss jewellery talent through training and the promotion of their creations. The winner is selected by a jury of five people representing the diversity of professions in the world of jewellery: journalist, teacher, dealer, gemologist and, of course, jeweller.

For the first time, journalist and influencer Laura Inghirami, founder of Donna Jewel, will have her own space dedicated to Italian schools training young aspiring jewellers. As part of a collaborative project with GemGenève, she will host the Galdus School in Milan. Founded more than twenty years ago in the parish of San Galdino — hence its name — Galdus is a training school created in 1990 by a group of professionals in the field of training and career guidance. The theme of the Donna Jewel space is "No Limit". A theme in keeping with the work of Laura Inghirami, recognised by *Forbes Italia* as one of Italy's top 100 young talents under the age of 30, who highlights the limitless creativity of young jewellery enthusiasts on her Instagram page. A celebration of youth that is part of the DNA of this atypical show.



Thorn shells earrings
Courtesy Wallis Hong, GemGenève



MINIATURE



Singing bird box (c.1868), Jacques Bruguier

Photo Maurice Aeschmann. Courtoisie Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, GemGenève



“OUR FLEXIBILITY ALLOWS US GREAT FREEDOM”

Her dynamism allows her to move mountains. With her small team, Nadège Totah has grown GemGenève, making it an unmissable event in the jewellery fair calendar in just a few years.

She takes great care with her exhibitors. Co-organiser of the show, Nadège Totah, together with Mathieu Dekeukelaire, runs an event on a “human scale” and instils a spirit of conviviality that is rare in this often discreet and hushed environment. Daughter of Ronny Totah, co-founder of GemGenève and an internationally respected figure in the world of jewellery, Nadège Totah has a keen eye for creation, international trade shows and trends. For her, starting from the desires and needs of the exhibitors is the key to the success of GemGenève. A great state of mind based on respect and trust, which is appreciated by the participants.

What lessons did you learn from your November edition?

Something that we had already sensed in May 2022 has become even more obvious: GemGenève is now fully integrated into the international calendar of our exhibitors. At the same time, we have become more professional. We no longer had the excuse that we were a young show. In November 2021, we organised what we called the “challenging” edition, a very special edition put together in a very short time and in the context of a still complicated global health situation, but now we realise that in the end, all the last editions have been good!

What was the feedback from your exhibitors?

It is thanks to our exhibitors and buyers that we have decided to organise a second edition in November 2022, after the one in May. To be more precise, it was our buyers who asked our exhibitors to have a second show in the autumn. And the feedback has been very good. There was a small trend: the stone dealers had a better edition than the jewellery dealers. Maybe May is better for jewellery, and

November for stones. We’ll have to follow this closely and see how it goes from one edition to the next.

So you intend to keep two editions per year?

That’s the idea, but we’re not closing the door on other opportunities. If, for example, our exhibitors want to go abroad, if we feel that it’s the right time, and if they are ready to follow us, we will do so. This also means that we can reserve the right to cancel an edition if, in discussion with the exhibitors and buyers, they let us know that they will not be coming. And this is only possible thanks to the relationships of respect and trust that we have built up with them.

Isn’t this philosophy of a fair “by the exhibitors, for the exhibitors” difficult to maintain in terms of organisation?

It’s quite the opposite! I would even say that it is much simpler: if all the exhibitors ask us to organise an event, that means that they will all be present. And it’s bound to be a good fair from which everyone leaves satisfied. Working this way means that we don’t take any risks. For example, if it is brought to our

attention that the date is not right and that the buyers will not be there, we will not do it before we have incurred all the construction costs and thus have the possibility of reimbursing the exhibitors 100%. We are a very small team with low running costs. We go to two shows a year with the flexibility to cancel or go internationally if the exhibitors want. It's a real freedom.

So you never worry about the organisation?

You never think, "Is this going to go well? Simply because the buyers go where the exhibitors are. And if 200 exhibitors show up, it's bound to be a good show. This year, we're assuming that we'll have a May edition and a November edition, bearing in mind that it's the return of the Hong Kong show in September. If all the exhibitors have a very good show in Hong Kong, we will discuss with them whether it makes sense to come back a month later with the same goods and the same buyers. We have the flexibility to be able to cancel or postpone even at very short notice.

3 questions to... Mathieu Dekeukelaire

Mathieu Dekeukelaire is the co-director of GemGenève.

Who comes to GemGenève, apart from buyers and exhibitors?

GemGenève is unique in that it is a meeting place for both professionals — jewellery designers, gem dealers, retailers, collectors, connoisseurs, buyers, museums, etc. — and the general public. Last November's edition was the largest in terms of attendance. We are not a huge show, we are around 3,500 visits per day, but we can go up to 5,000 visits, because people come back several times.

Do you think GemGenève is becoming a focal point for these jewellery players?

It's not a strategy, but rather something we felt from the beginning. Little by little, we wanted to promote the world of jewellery and gemmology as a whole. We have noticed that all the professions that gravitate around the world of jewellery send at least one representative during the show: the great houses, the buyers, the historians, the gemologists, the experts, the schools, the designers... The idea behind it is to take advantage of all this diversity of professions and trades that work together and that come to GemGenève and to create a moment of synergy.

This year you are launching "The Villa of Lost Arts", a space dedicated to forgotten or dying trades. Could you tell us more about it?

This is a first edition with seven or eight exhibitors who will come to present the diversity of the jewellery arts: polishers, lapidaries, engravers, photographers, etc. [see p.42] These are not necessarily endangered trades, but often shadow trades linked to the world of jewellery, which the general public does not necessarily know about. These high-precision crafts make the beauty of jewellery-making.

GemGenève thus continues its mission with the desire to bring together the best in the field of jewellery and precious stones.

— *Nadège Totah*

This very iterative way of working is reminiscent of a start-up...

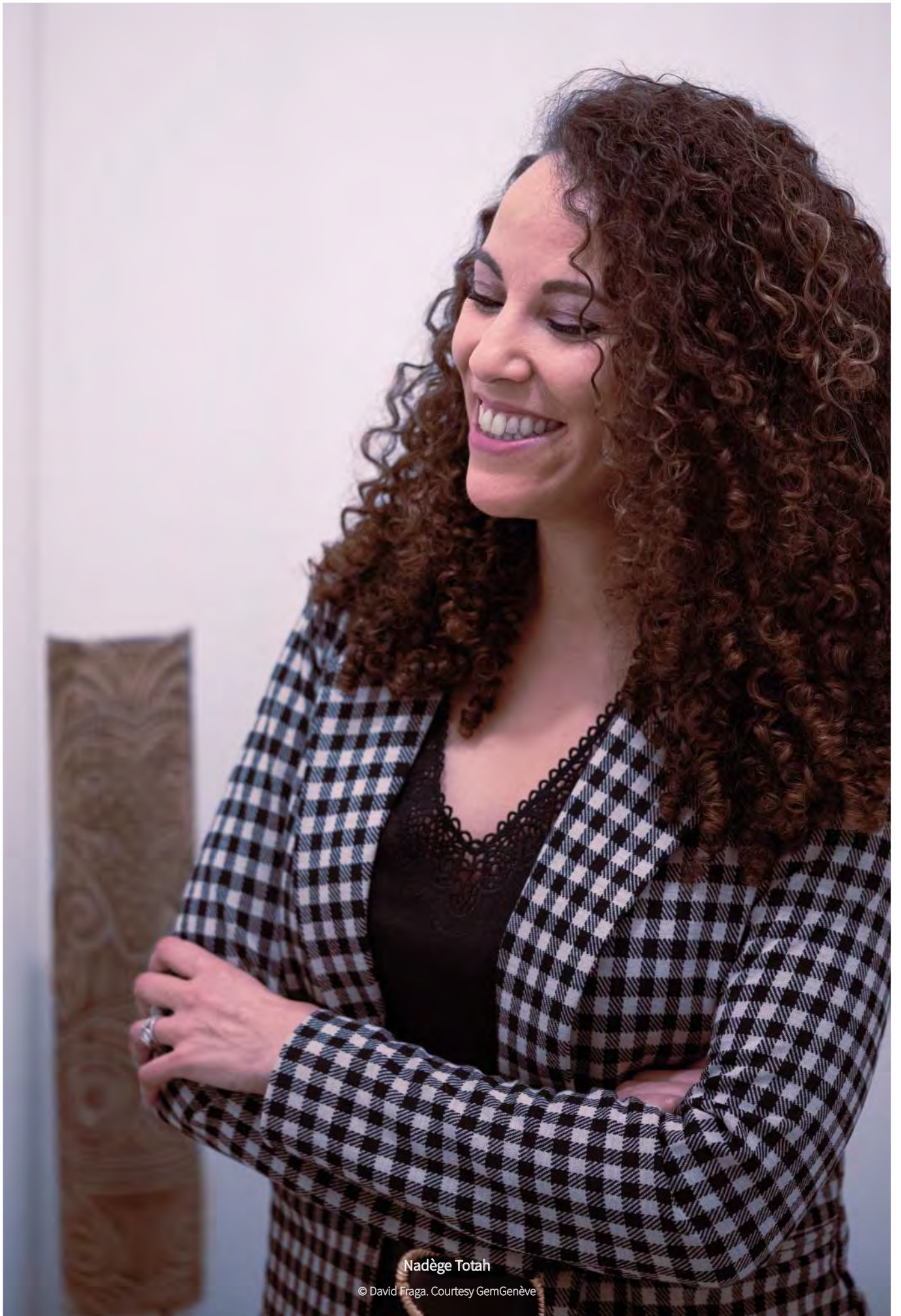
We started from scratch. We had no stand, no experience of setting up a trade fair, no service providers. We built a product and behind it, a company that also started from scratch and gradually became structured. Over the years, we have learned from our mistakes as beginners. We grow with the show. Today, we have a little less room for error, because we have become more professional. Last November, the assembly was serene, everyone now knows how to work with everyone else. And then, by setting up a show every five months, we don't have time to forget and the work reflexes come back quickly.

What challenges did you face in putting together the May edition?

We completely rethought the circulation of visitors and the flow of the public. The layout and organisation of the hall was really our biggest challenge — at Palexpo, all the spaces are different and we don't have the same ones from one edition to the next, we always have to start from scratch, because the logic of spatial organisation is not the same. Between a study on a plan and reality, things are very different. Two perpendicular axes will distribute attention over all the spaces, not just in the centre as is often the case at fairs. We are prepared for many scenarios, but whatever happens, it will be beautiful!

What developments do you foresee for GemGenève?

Personally, I think it would be nice to do a small GemGenève abroad, why not in Dubai or Singapore. Several exhibitors have asked us to think about an American edition, but organising an event in the United States might be more complicated. On the one hand, it is difficult to manage in terms of regulations, and on the other hand, organising an event in the United States requires specific skills and we are only a small team. Here, everything also works well because we play at home.



Nadège Totah

© David Fraga. Courtesy GemGenève

INTERVIEW

What are your exhibitors' expectations?

Some ask us for small international events, a sort of GemGenève Boutique that could be adapted abroad. Others, on the contrary, are asking us for a larger, more general fair. So we're going to think about new formats, but for the moment we don't have any specific projects. If someone had asked me five years ago where GemGenève would be today, my predictions would not have been worth much...

What are the main hubs in the jewellery sector?

Things are happening in Europe, but with the reopening of the Asian market, we will have to watch what happens in the coming months. Asia has always been an important place, and it will probably become so again. At the last Hong Kong show, which had just reopened after the confinements, several observers noted a significant increase in prices. But let's not forget that while Asia was closed, we continued our activities for three years. We saw that the price of beautiful things had increased in general. To really take the temperature of the market in Asia, we will have to wait for the new edition of the Hong Kong fair next September.

What trends do you observe in contemporary design?

In recent years, the issues of traceability and sustainability have often come up in discussions [\[see p.62\]](#). This is a topic in itself. On the creative side, there are very colourful, slightly offbeat designer jewellery pieces on the market, with a bit of "pizzazz", which can be worn every day with a pair of jeans or casual clothes. We like the big jewels, which are a bit fancy, but still a nice item at a certain price. Otherwise, of course, provenance jewellery, top quality and very bright colours are always appreciated.

Do certain themes recur?

Nature is omnipresent. The designers are very much inspired by it. We feel the desire to return to the very essence of jewellery, to naturalist inspiration.





Diamants roses

Courtesy Kunming Diamonds. GemGenève





NOVELTY

Rockah pendant
Courtesy Marija Iva. GemGenève



SAY IT WITH STONES...

A major event for jewellers and gemstone dealers, GemGenève brings together the finest in the field. Here is a non-exhaustive overview of some of the houses present at this 2023 edition.

Finestar. Diamonds are eternal...

Finestar's key words: origin, transparency, technology, ethics. For 25 years, this group has made the queen of precious stones its speciality. It masters the entire diamond chain, from mines to market. Present in eight countries, it has manufacturing plants in Surat in India, Gaborone in Botswana and Windhoek in Namibia, and soon in South Africa. "Every polished natural diamond we see today began its journey more than a billion years ago in the heart of the earth and passes through the experienced hands of our highly skilled artisans, who are in pursuit of perfection," says the group, which places people at the centre of its communication. With the "Know Your Artisan" certificate, each diamond made in Botswana and Namibia reveals the men and women who have shaped these stones. Finestar diamonds are famous for their original cuts and grandeur. The group can also boast being an early adopter of Tracr, the traceability platform launched in 2018 by De Beers, and considered by Forbes to be one of the top 50 blockchain solutions in the world in 2020 and 2022.

Finestar

Mumbai, India
www.finestardiamonds.com

Marija Iva. For modern women

After a decade with the prestigious Piaget company, Marija Iva Djordjevic launched her own jewellery brand Marija Iva in New York in 2022. The self-

described "artist, mother, world citizen and creator" designs jewellery for modern and dynamic women. She claims a timeless aesthetic inspired not by fashions and trends, but by her desires, her favourite things: a reading, a work of art, a landscape. All may be at the origin of her collections. Trained as a jeweller, Marija Iva first works on drawings, which she enhances with watercolours. She follows all the stages of production, right up to the polishing. Quality and know-how are at the heart of her concerns. The Eden collection, inspired by the snake motif, the "Eternal" collection, inspired by her stays in Paris, and "Dana" and "Hamptons" have been added to the "New York" collection, launched last April. This collection plays with the motif of the arrow, that of love, but also that of the one-way streets of the famous city, enhanced by the pearl whose mobility invites us to think of the New York that never sleeps and which never ceases to inspire Marija Iva.

Marija Iva

New York, United States
www.marijaiva.com

Topaze Impériale. Imperial topaze

This house was born of the desire to make this unique stone, with its sunset tones, the most famous of all topazes known in Europe. It owes its name to the Russian tsars who took control of its extraction and production and named it after them. In 2004, Stefan Gruber founded the company, relying on the network of his wife's family, owners of mines in Brazil. "Today, most of the imperial topaz mines have closed," he says. The Pakistani deposits are almost exhausted, as are those in Russia. The main deposits exploited are in Brazil. Stefan Gruber works with the best producer of coloured stones in the country: Duarte & Bastos. Recently, Topaze Impériale has also specialised in the trade of Paraiba tourmalines from Mozambique, which have become excellent investments. African mines are not inexhaustible and prices are not expected to fall...

Topaze Impériale

Vienna, Austria
www.topazeimperiale.com

Caram. From Jaipur to Idar-Oberstein

Caram specialises in emeralds from Colombia and Zambia, exceptional sapphires from Kashmir and Sri Lanka and rare rubies from Burma and Mozambique. The company was founded in 1975 by Raj Jain in Idar-Oberstein, a German town famous for its precious stones extracted from the Steinkaulenber mines. Caram has its roots in Jaipur, Rajasthan, the gemstone capital of the world. For seven generations, it has been developing its network, finely woven between Asia and Europe. In 2013, it also opened a branch in Hong Kong. Caram's experts source the most beautiful rough stones from mines in Asia, Africa and South America. These are then worked and transformed in the Idar-Oberstein workshops. Some of these most beautiful pieces can be discovered at this edition of GemGenève.

Caram

Hong Kong, China
www.caram.de

Paul Fischer. A family history

More than a name, Paul Fischer is an institution in the world of jewellery. The company, founded in 1850 in Vienna by Julius Fischer, first specialised in natural pearls from the Persian Gulf, which at the time were worth more than diamonds. Julius's grandsons, Ferdinand and Robert, took over and in 1921 opened Brüder Fisher and extended the business to the jewellery trade, as the arrival of cultured pearls had considerably changed the market and prices. Following the movements of history, the family business moved to London in 1938, then to New York in 1945. The following years were marked by the personality of Paul Fischer. Passionate about jewellery and antique pieces, he was keen to train the new generation of jewellers. He died in 2019, leaving behind a company of international renown that is run by his daughter, Marianne Fischer. The Peregrina pearl and the Excelsior II diamond are among the emblematic pieces that have passed through the hands of Paul Fischer Inc.

Paul Fischer

New York, United States
www.paulfisherinc.net

Elena's world of wonders

Elena Okutova cultivates the art of the past in the present. Her creations are poems in metal and stone. Odes to harmony, movement and nature, nourished by the breath of history. Byzantium and its splendours, the Middle Ages and its fantastic bestiary, the Renaissance and its refinements... this young creator's gaze turned very early to the arts of the past. A keen draughtswoman from a very young age, she loved Ilya Repin and Viktor Vasnetsov, and chose to enter the Moscow State Academy of Art and Industry, the MGHPU SG Stroganov, metal section, a material she admired for its permanence. In her third year, the discovery of the art of jewellery was a revelation. She found her scale in her miniature sculptures. When she graduated, Elena had already been working for a year for a company that imports stones and designs jewellery. There she learned the trade and adapted to the requirements of the client and the material. In 2009, she decided to fly on her own, to write a blank page, that of her creations. Elena conceives a singular universe, halfway between the marvellous and the fantastic. Each piece is a drawing, then a wax sculpture, cast in silver or gold; she is fond of *champlevé* enamel, the famous technique of the Middle Ages whose palette she revisits. Smoky grey, blue-lilac, water green, she makes the subtle shades her own. She likes prehnite or labradorite for their changeable character which suits her universe. In 2010, during a photo shoot in Moscow, the actress Eva Green discovered Elena's creations. She bought several rings that she wore in the series *Camelot*, then in *Dark Shadows* and *Dumbo*. The success is there. Elena has just found her most beautiful ambassador.

Garaude. A better look at precious stones

is listed in the "Champions of Growth 2023" ranking of *Les Échos*. A success story for this company founded by François Garaude over forty years ago. A traveller who has explored the world's cultures, having visited India, Brazil and many other countries, and an architect by training, he chose to specialise in the cutting and trading of natural precious stones. From his workshops in Bangkok come some of the most beautiful rubies, sapphires, spinels and emeralds destined for the high jewellery industry. Richemont, LVMH



Crack ring

Courtesy A.win Siu. GemGenève

NOTEBOOK

and Kering are among its clients. The opening in May of an office in New York will open the house of Garaude to the American market. The success story continues!

Garaude

Paris. France

www.garaude.com

IGC. The diamond heritage

The adventure of the IGC group began in Antwerp at the end of the 19th century, in 1893 to be exact, a period that saw the diamond trade boosted by the discovery of new mines in South Africa. A stonemason by the name of Frans Claes saw the potential and decided to devote himself to cutting diamonds. With his father's expertise, his son Jacques founded the company known today as IGC Group. A story written over five generations, making the Antwerp group one of the preferred suppliers to jewellery brands and the Swiss watch industry. IGC's reputation is based on the finesse of its small diamonds and its expertise in high-precision polishing techniques. With foresight, it opened a polishing factory in Thailand in 1980, then in Laos in 1999, and in Botswana eight years later. Today, the group has six sales offices around the world.

IGC

Antwerp. Belgium

www.igcgroup.com

AMA









Peony ring, Elena Okutova

Courtesy Elena Okutova. GemGenève

WIDE RANGE



Poseidon earrings with tanzanites, sapphires and diamonds

Courtesy Denise Cassou. GemGenève

DIVINE SAPPHIRES

Sapphires are said to have almost supernatural powers. Associated with the sacred since Antiquity, the gem of choice for crowned heads, the sapphire fascinates by its shades and its velvety texture.

No, sapphire is not just blue. This variety of corundum gems comes in a rainbow. Pink, green, yellow, purple... One of the most sought-after is the purplish pink or orangey pink hue of Padparadja sapphires. In reality, sapphire is colourless at the base, it is its impurities — oxides — that give it its colour. Titanium and iron for the blue, chromium for the pink, vanadium for the purple. Found throughout the world — a deposit has even been found in the Puy-de-Dôme region — the main mines are concentrated in the Indian Ocean, but also in East Africa and Australia. Among the most famous are Ceylon sapphires, Sri Lanka sapphires and Burmese sapphires, which are still highly sought after.

Historian Joanna Hardy patiently explored these mining sites for her latest book: *Sapphire* [see box p.40]. “To write this book, I travelled all over the world to visit mines in Madagascar, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, etc.,” she says. In her book, she combines her scientific knowledge — she is a gemologist by training — with patient archive work. A double hat of jewellery historian and scientist for this enthusiast who was, among other jobs, an appraiser of rough diamonds, a trader of polished diamonds, and then a jewellery specialist with the auction houses Philips and Sotheby’s.

Rooted in history

The result of her research? A beautiful work published in the manner of an art book to celebrate this gem with its complex symbolism. “High quality jewellery is art. It’s not just jewelry,” explains Joanna Hardy. “Historically, gems have a special place in beliefs, especially sapphire in the Middle Ages and even earlier. It is linked to the notion of heaven, to celestial beings. It

is the most mystical stone. Sapphires come in all colours, but blue is linked to heaven. It is worn on a crown, because the head is connected to God. Bishops also wear sapphires for the same reason, the light of heaven touches the stone in contact with the skin. Thus, it creates a direct link between the divine light and the body.”

Featuring hundreds of images of jewellery and photographs of microscopic sapphire inclusions, it tells the story of some of the most important discoveries of this stone and some of the most beautiful jewellery designs. Included are sets from Elizabeth Taylor, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duchess of Windsor, as well as pieces from iconic jewellery houses such as Bulgari, Cartier, Chaumet, Tiffany and Van Cleef & Arpels. The book also features a selection of works by 21st century designers such as Lauren Adriana, Bina Goenka, Hemmerle, Shaun Leane and Mish, as well as an overview of six major private collections.

Often the stories that accompany the most beautiful sapphires are adorned with legends. Such is the case with the





“Grand Saphir” of Louis XIV, one of the most beautiful sapphires known in the 17th century, which is kept in the Natural History Museum in Paris. The gem, which comes from Sri Lanka, was given to the Sun King around 1669. Doubts remain as to the identity of the generous donor, probably in gratitude for the king’s lavish jewellery purchases. Its rhomboidal faceting, unique in the world, could be of Indo-Mogul origin. Stolen in 1792, then found shortly afterwards, it was chosen by Daubenton in 1796 to enrich the collections of the Museum. At the time, it was thought to be... a crystal.

The Queen of stones

The most prized of all, Kashmir sapphires are extremely rare. They are true museum pieces. “The mines in Kashmir no longer produce sapphires because mining them is very difficult,” explains Ronny Totah, the co-founder of GemGenève. Passionate about these mythical stones, the Geneva-based jeweller is an internationally recognised and respected specialist. “It seems that the Kashmir sapphires that are beautiful, even very beautiful, come from a vein — or a pocket — that was only mined for about six years in the 1880s, so we see that ultimately, the production of remarkable Kashmir is very limited.”

Today, only old Kashmir can be found on the market. Hence their rarity. “These really have a different material from the others: there is a consistency, a velvetiness that other sapphires do not have. So, obviously, some people might prefer to have a much more crystalline stone like a Ceylon or a Burmese — which is very pretty too — but you could say that Kashmir has a little less pure crystallisation and that’s what gives it a silky appearance. So I think the combination of their beauty, their uniqueness and their rarity makes Kashmir sapphires the most prized.”

For the co-founder of GemGenève, the main criterion for selecting the precious blue gem is love at first sight. What I like about Kashmir sapphires

— and what all their fans like — is precisely that velvety, very silky appearance, with a slightly open blue colour,” says Ronny Totah. When you look at it, you get the impression that its colour is “thick”. This is different from a white diamond where the selection criteria might be a shape you like, a size, proportions or a colour. For me, it is really the queen of stones.

The quality of a Kashmir, however, is based on a complex combination of several criteria: a beautiful colour, a beautiful shape and that unique velvety appearance. Kashmir sapphire has a dichroism, which means that it

also has a second colour that is a bit green, but this colour should not be visible when you look at the stone in front of you,” explains Ronny Totah. If you turn it 90°, you could see this secondary colour, which is not at all disturbing if it is positioned correctly.”

Colour, shape, smoothness. An ideal of perfection that is difficult to achieve even for beautiful specimens. “It is true that given the rarity of Kashmir sapphires, not all of our stones have this appearance, but we do make a few small compromises on one of these criteria in order to have a beautiful range of Kashmir sapphires...”

Round table Sapphire, A Celebration of Colour

GemGenève will honour this gem of all fantasies during the round table “Sapphire, A Celebration of Colour” moderated by the historian Joanna Hardy, who will also come to sign her book *Sapphire*, the latest in a trilogy whose first volumes were devoted to rubies and emeralds. During this conference, she will discuss the unexplained talismanic powers conferred on sapphire in the Middle Ages, or the mistrust it arouses in certain parts of the world. Sapphire was often the stone of choice for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and its popularity has never waned with other members of the royal family. Joanna Hardy will also present the jewellery collections of socialites such as Daisy Fellowes, the Duchess of Windsor and Elizabeth Taylor. The historian will be able to present her research into the sapphire jewellery of three private collectors at the conference.

A Kashmir tale, by Ronny Totah

“I remember the very first Kashmir I bought. It was in 1985. At the time, I was working for the company in which my father was a partner, Horovitz & Co. At an auction in St. Moritz, I was attracted to a stone, a Kashmir sapphire of 8.88 carats. It was the first time I had felt such an attraction to a stone. I bought it, I think, for \$8,000 a carat. So all 8 were there. I presented this stone to one of our important clients, a dealer. I was proud and trembling, and I was right not to be very confident, because it didn’t even catch his eye! He came back some time later, by which time I had collected a set of six Kashmir stones. This dealer sold the six stones to one of his customers. We started like that, then we had a set of 14, and finally we became one of the big sellers and buyers of Kashmirs, thanks to this 8.88-carat stone. This anecdote has a twist. In 2022, I meet a person who owns a lot of Kashmir sapphires. I realise that he owns many of the stones that have passed through our hands. I tell him about this famous sapphire and he says, “Ah, but this stone, I have it now!” Finally, 38 years later, it came back into my life! It has been repolished and has lost a few points, so the 8.88 carats are less important than the quality of the stone. Now, it sits in the centre of a collection of Kashmirs. This stone made a deep impression on me and was the beginning of my love for Kashmir sapphires.”



FACETS

Courtesy Heinz Mayer, GemGenève



IN THE SHADOW OF BEAUTIFUL STONES

Behind each piece of jewellery lies a wealth of expertise. Admired by all, these trades are nevertheless little known, not to say on the way to extinction. GemGenève brings them back to light.

They are the living memory of the arts of adornment. Sometimes neglected, often forgotten, these shadow skills, some of them thousands of years old, have been considerably transformed over the last few decades in line with technology, trends and fashions. Except that the traditional chain of transmission from master to pupil is running out of steam. The training courses on offer do not always meet the needs of these niche professions, which often require years of learning and practice. In the long term, there is a risk that some of these discreet professions, known and appreciated only by the initiated, will become extinct. For this new edition, GemGenève, with the support of Herbert Horovitz, has chosen to put them back in the spotlight in its new space “La Villa des Arts Perdus”. Intended to highlight these invisible professions in the world of jewellery, the villa brings together representatives of these little-known crafts to talk about their passion in a collaborative space open to the general public where meetings, demonstrations and exhibitions of pieces follow one another. An opportunity to discover the hidden facets of jewellery and watchmaking and, perhaps, to arouse new vocations. Explore the intricacies of these trades to be rediscovered.

Sheath makers

What would a jewel be without its case? In the leather goods sector, the case maker makes cases, bases, boxes, etc. Generally, he uses wooden barrels as a frame, or cardboard or plastic supports that he covers with leather, paper or imitation leather. He may specialise in cases, supporting parts or gilding. According to the French National Institute of Art Trades (INMA), this profession, practised by around

thirty professionals in France, is benefiting from the export development of *haute maroquinerie* carried by major groups such as Hermès or Vuitton. Still according to the INMA, Switzerland, with its strong tradition in watchmaking and jewellery, has a large craft industry in art sheathing, cases, bearing parts and displays. Wholesaling and fancy goods tend to face competition from England and Italy. Although there are no longer any training courses in sheathing as such, sheath makers often come from the leather goods industry, often followed by an apprenticeship in leather gilding. At the Villa des Arts Perdus, the Geneva company Vaudaux, founded in 1908 and specialising in the design and manufacture of cases, accessories and luxury leather goods, bears witness to the vitality of this profession.

Lapidaries

Cutting is the cornerstone of jewellery making. These specialists start with the rough stone that they shape on the grinding wheel to draw the facets that will reveal the colour,

transparency and magic of the gems adorning the jeweller's sets. They also play a central role in repairing damaged stones or trading gems. In France, a CAP lapidary option coloured stones prepared in two years can also be followed in vocational training with weekly courses of initiation or improvement in the techniques of the simple cut of the work with the lathe or for the repair of damaged stones. The complexity of this essential profession is presented at the Villa by Victoria Raynaud and Justin Prim, a well-known couple of gem cutters based in Bangkok.

Pearl stringers

It is a lacemaker's job. With meticulousness and patience, the pearl threader calibrates and reflects on the harmony of the pearls that will make up the set. This is one of the most delicate stages in the field of jewellery and is carried out entirely by hand. Each pearl or ball of precious stone has to be carefully selected and attached to a silk thread. A knot separates each element to avoid friction that could damage the materials.

Polishers

The final touch. The polisher finishes a precious piece of jewellery and smooths it using emery paper, a silicone wheel, a brush, wires and various polishing pastes — including pumice and cloth pad — to make the surface uniform and shiny. Some initial training courses allow you to obtain a CAP in jewellery making, polishing option in France or in the framework of continuing professional training, such as the CQP Operator in polishing or the CQP Expert in polishing. The presentation of this

Schools in force at GemGenève

The future of the jewellery and watchmaking professions is one of the cornerstones of the show. Since its launch, GemGenève has given pride of place to students and schools, and is organising its 2nd edition of the gouache competition with the main Swiss schools: the technical schools of French-speaking Switzerland (CFP Arts Genève, the Vallée de Joux Technical School and the CPNE Pôle Arts Appliqués) and the ASMEBI (École Romane des Métiers de la Bijouterie). The idea? To get students to think about topical issues and how to transcribe them in their drawings and designs using a traditional jewellery technique: gouache. Each project is associated with an exhibitor of the show in order to propose to the students a concrete work on the gems brought by the exhibitors. For this edition, the students will work on the theme "Nothing is lost, everything is transformed" according to the famous quote by Lavoisier. Circular economy, sustainable development, recycling, reuse, transmission... all terms referring to the need to meet the needs of the present while anticipating the viability of the future. This theme calls for a reflection on the use of resources, their regeneration, their life cycle, while mobilising jewellery know-how. An echo of current events and of our time.

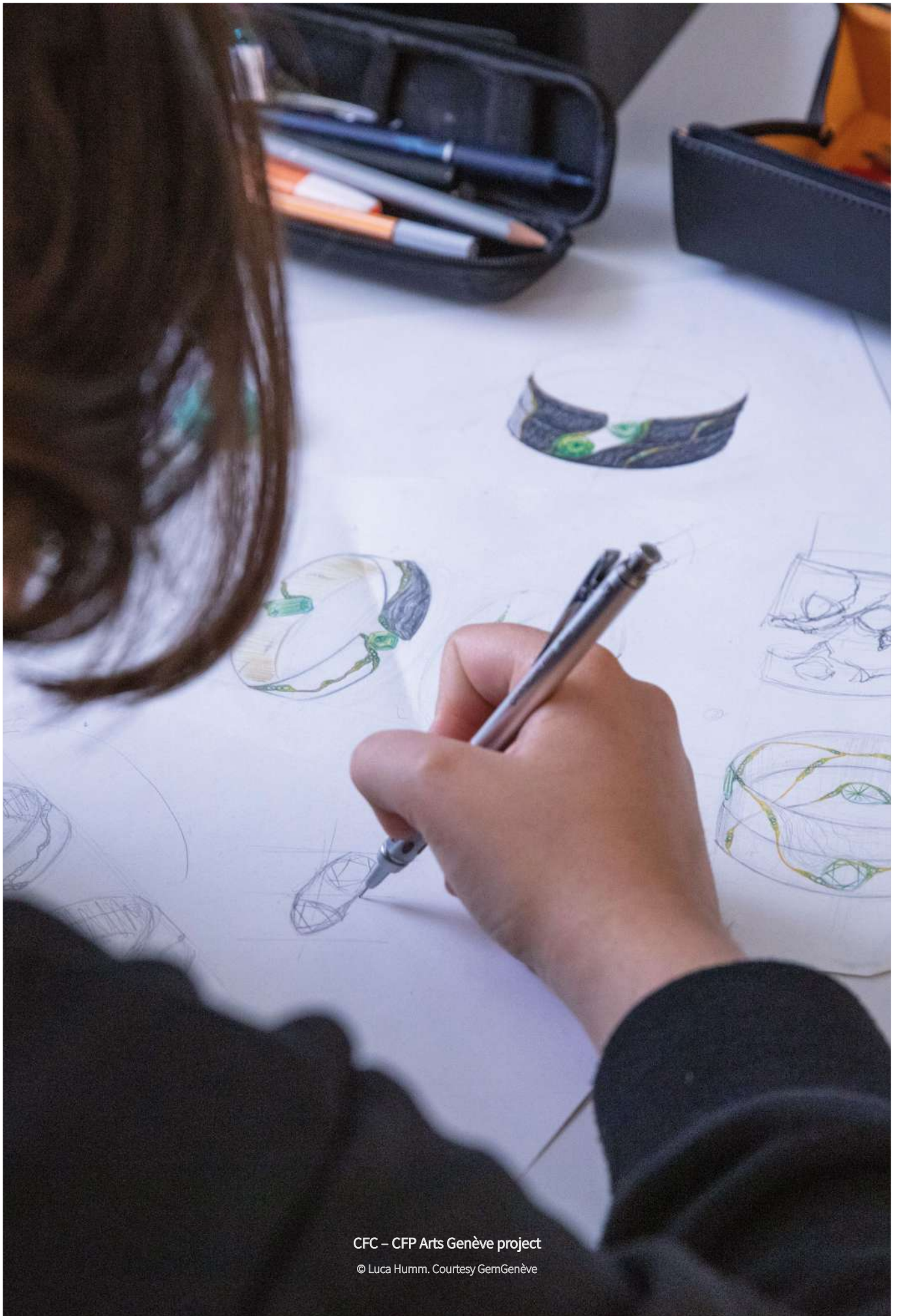
profession is entrusted to Marie Chabrol, polisher, gemologist and teacher at the Institut de Bijouterie de Saumur and also co-founder of the Association Gemmologie & Francophonie [\[see p.62\]](#)

Chainists

From a precious metal wound on a mandrel, then cut with a saw blade, the chain maker makes chains of metal rings closed by welding. He can also make them using the lost wax casting technique. Besançon was the historical cradle of the chain-making activity, before the disappearance of the companies that worked under contract. Today, the manufacture of chains in series is mainly industrial, the craft trade having become rare, as the INMA points out. Collaborating with lapidaries and diamond dealers when it comes to inlaying a chain of gems, chain makers work for wholesalers, jewellery brands and independent workshops alike.

Hard stone mosaicists

This spectacular technique of inlaying multicoloured semi-precious stones has its roots in the Italian Renaissance. Used to create patterns, flowers, landscapes, portraits and scenes, *pietra dura* was the glory of the Florentine Medici grand-ducal manufactory in the late 16th century. Mauro Tacconi, son of the eminent Florentine mosaic master Marco Tacconi, will present the subtleties of this ancient noble art at GemGenève. It is worth noting that the great specialist in hard stone mosaics and Italian sculpture, Professor Anna Maria Massinelli, is coming to GemGenève to present her new book *Natura omnia artes magistra*.



CFC – CFP Arts Genève project

© Luca Humm. Courtesy GemGenève





MM 2022

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CREATING JEWELLERY TO TELL THE STORY OF TODAY'S WORLD

In front of us, the jewel on its plinth. Behind it, a journey, guided by a designer determined to showcase his vision of the world. A look back at the creation of a collection, from its conceptualisation to its sale.

Creative, innovative, inspiring... today's jewellery defies the codes of classical jewellery. Elaborated under a variety of genres and influences, it bears the imprint of its creator, told through colours, cuts or volumes. Today's jewellery also bears witness to a global world of multiple heritages, crossed and shared. A world where ethics and the environment go hand in hand with an increasingly sensitive and committed creation.

More and more young designers are embracing these new values, and it is with these values that they work on a daily basis. Between sourcing materials and localised production, independent jewellery often tends towards ethical and transparent production. This aspect of creation reflects a renewed relationship with jewellery, where each stage carries the story and the issues that underlie its creation. "What I would like for my jewellery is for it to be able to carry a message," says Tiffany Bähler. A designer from Lausanne, she opened her studio in 2015 and is presenting her first range, Invisible, at GemGenève this year.

From craft to art

Jeweller, gemmologist, setter, lapidary... there are many specialities in the field of jewellery. And they require several years of study dedicated to manufacturing know-how. Generally three years, sometimes followed by a bachelor's degree in jewellery design. This was the training followed by Tiffany Bähler, who first trained at the CFPA in Geneva. It was a way of familiarising herself with the materials, metals and stones as well as the codes of high jewellery... in order to get

rid of them. When she arrived at Central Saint Martins in London for her bachelor's degree, she remembers: "I had just come from my school, where everything was very meticulous. And there I had fun. In a bachelor's degree, you become completely autonomous, which is a great way to develop as a designer."

"Is it a necessary path to create your own range? Not necessarily," says the designer. However, she concedes: "I do think that it helps a lot. It's easier to say to yourself, 'what I've designed, I can make.'" This apprenticeship allows one to know the possibilities of a material as well as the techniques that can be applied to it: moulding, filigree or welding for metal work, for example; but also the placing of stones, cuts, etc. These are all resources that allow us to give free rein to our imagination and go further in the design of a piece, while being aware of its material contingencies. "For a project like Invisible, where everything had to be created, from the drawing to the 25 pieces in the range, it can take several months, or even half a year, at least," says Tiffany Bähler. When it's a single piece,

depending on the complexity of the object to be made, from a simple ring to a set of stones, production will take from a few days to several months.

Digital technology is increasingly penetrating the world of jewellery, accompanying creative learning. Thanks to Computer Aided Design and Manufacturing (CAD/CAM) techniques, the design can now be done on a tablet, gaining in precision and quality. And although hand sketching is still favoured by teachers, the move to the virtual allows for greater precision in the creation of models, minimising errors. For potential customers, it also allows them to visualise the jewellery ordered and reduce the gap between expectations and the final result. Thus, some schools now offer a diploma in this field, such as the Haute École de Joaillerie de Paris, which has introduced a bachelor's degree in digital design in September 2022. And although this specialisation is still new, it could well become more widespread.

Building a network

Although not compulsory, going through a school also provides easier access to a network of professionals. Throughout the manufacturing stages of a piece of jewellery, an independent creator will necessarily have to call on subcontractors who will supply him with his material and ensure its quality and traceability. Gold, silver, platinum or palladium are generally the most popular metals, imported from China, Russia or South Africa. Today, however, more and more jewellers are turning to suppliers of recycled metals, limiting both costs and environmental impact without compromising quality. As for gemstones, suppliers can recover old jewellery and extract old diamonds for recycling, but individuals can also

bring in their old jewellery directly for processing. And if new stones are used, both the big brands and the independent designers are particularly attentive to their provenance.

Tiffany Bähler likes to make her own jewellery. However, she also calls on the services of craftsmen to assist her. A gem setter, for example, who fixes the stones in the jewel and secures them using different techniques depending on the piece: claw setting, bead setting, closed setting, half-closed setting... But also a lapping machine, specialised in the surface treatment of precious metals. It allows the surface to be refined or

even engraved with precise patterns. "You have to test different partners to find the right ones. This is done mainly by word of mouth, we ask colleagues, then we test and see if it works or not," she explains.

This sharing of information also helps to perpetuate the work of independent creators, which does not stop with the making of the jewellery. It is important to be visible, to communicate, to create a brand image and a visual identity — with a logo, for example — to photograph the pieces and to package them. So many small parameters that determine the quality of a range, its attractiveness and its visibility to

3 questions to... Tiffany Bähler

Tiffany Bähler is an independent jewellery designer.

How do you learn to conceptualise a piece of jewellery?

The three years of the bachelor's degree in jewellery design allow you to go beyond what students know how to do, to discover, to be curious, to experiment with materials: increasing the size of a piece of jewellery, creating with tin cans... a striking memory when I studied at Central Saint Martins in London. It's about freeing yourself from constraints, unleashing your creativity.

How would you define today's jewellery?

We wear jewellery in a very personal way and it often catches the eye of others "Oh what a beautiful ring", "Beautiful necklace", etc. I think that through this, we are able to express ourselves in a more personal way. I think that by this means, we can also carry a message. And the ethical aspect is very important, like finding out where the materials come from for example. In fact, these days we might tend to recycle the materials we have available rather than use new ones.

What is the aesthetic of your Invisible range?

It is very different from what I usually do, usually minimalist, rigorous, favouring pure and perfectly polished forms. Here, I decided to work with plastic pellets found on our beaches that I moulded using a traditional sand casting process, injecting molten recycled gold or silver. As the metal has taken the shape of the pellet, this creates unique pieces, as the mould cannot be reused afterwards. The aim is to talk about and raise awareness of the problem of plastic pellets through jewellery, which is passed on from generation to generation, and which therefore retains a trace of this pollution.



Tiffany Bähler

Courtesy Tiffany Bähler. GemGenève

the public and potential buyers. And which ultimately involve a number of players around a single collection, implying a cost that is superimposed on that of working with precious materials: "You have to have some savings to be able to get started," admits Tiffany Bähler.

A duty to influence?

Why create a range of jewellery? If the question seems obvious at first glance, the answer is not for every designer. Faced with big brands and the multiplication of small companies, finding an original concept, a meaning that brings renewal and transformation, is at the heart of the creative process. Tiffany Bähler shares the doubts that accompanied her graduation from Central Saint Martins: "People close to me asked me why I didn't launch my own jewellery line. And I always wanted to, but I thought I didn't really have any goals and I didn't see what else I could add to the already crowded jewellery world. It was in June 2022 that I finally embarked on this adventure."

Independent creation also allows for a freer margin of expression than that of the big brands, reclaiming heritages and aesthetics reinterpreted in a more personal, and sometimes also, more innovative way. There are many ways of standing out, whether they are technical - a certain type of metal work or new alloys, for example - or aesthetic - work on colour or volume - or whether they put forward a story, a political or social message, as Tiffany Bähler does with *Invisible*, her collection: "My project will encompass several collections later on. The aim is to talk about pollution that is more or less invisible, and to

Villa des designers

At the heart of the show, the Designers' Village offers to discover ten contemporary designers, between six "Emerging Talents" and four "New Designers" to highlight innovative and inspired ideas, at the initiative of Nadège Totah.

Among the emerging talents, Aso Leon, awarded in China for his work on titanium; Wallis Hong and his fairy world; Fred Fa, an outstanding draughtsman with the most accomplished creations; or Teresa Escudero and her cosmic story.

The space of new designers selected by Vivienne Becker, jewellery historian, is dedicated to creative originality. Opening up jewellery to unexpected worlds, sometimes whimsical, sometimes poetic, the designers explore techniques and materials to define jewellery differently. This is an opportunity for the public to discover designers who are still relatively confidential and who are shaping the creation of tomorrow.

make it visible through jewellery. Each collection will be linked to an association fighting against pollution and I will donate a percentage of the sales. This is a way of engaging the creation, while involving its buyers... Because they too are more aware of their role in this ecosystem.

Environmental and ethical issues are thus at the heart of the challenges that are gradually transforming the jewellery and design market. For these questions are no longer just trends, but are now the basis for new modes of production and consumption. Among independent designers in particular, there is a desire to localise their production in order to limit transport, but also to maintain a local market. A practice that extends to other spheres of craft and art such as fashion, in search of better quality and more environmentally friendly materials.


Echoing this idea, the young designer confides: "I try to instill the value of craftsmanship: a piece of jewellery takes a certain amount of time to make and passes through the hands of experts in their field. Hence the idea of choosing objects carefully rather than accumulating them. A way, through her practice, to raise awareness and value the unique and sustainable object in the face of the frantic production of perishable objects.

Collection *Invisible*, Tiffany Bähler
Courtoisie Tiffany Bähler. GemGenève

TIFFIN

Alexandre Pouchkine, François Junod

Courtesy François Junod. GemGenève



FRANÇOIS JUNOD ENCHANTED ENCHANTER!

Between traditional watchmaking and technological innovation, François Junod brings the art of automata to life with a constantly renewed passion. While some of his most impressive creations are being presented at GemGenève, we discover the workshop of this outstanding craftsman.

In the Swiss mountains of Sainte-Croix, François Junod preserves the age-old art of exceptional automata in a workshop teeming with a multitude of objects. Inherited (or almost) from his father, this three-storey workshop is entirely dedicated to precision mechanics applied to art. A former cardboard factory in his father's time in the 1960s, it was sold to a company that made music boxes before being taken over by Junod in 1990. A place associated with a strong family history and a well-established art craft.

Junod's entry into the world of automata dates back to his teenage years, when he met his mentor, a Parisian watchmaker who worked on these incredible machines. "As a young teenager, I was fascinated from my first contact with these animated sculptures in the workshop of Michel Bertrand, the father of a classmate. For me, at the age of 14, this profession only existed in Pinocchio and fairy tales. It couldn't be real." Junod's interest in mechanics was also fuelled by his own family and the industrial history of his home town of Saint-Croix. Numerous companies were located there, manufacturing typewriters, cameras, phonographs and radios. "Like my father and grandfather before me, I trained at the Saint-Croix mechanical school." A story of transmission that is repeated today.

Now 64 years old, François Junod himself also works to ensure that this art is perpetuated and evolves over the generations. Regularly welcoming apprentices and trainees, he also takes part in external educational events designed to introduce the public to this fascinating world. We see him today at GemGenève but this was already the case a few weeks ago for Watches & Wonders. For him, the preservation of

this cultural heritage is essential, and he does everything possible to share this passion with as many people as possible. "I think the young people are really great. They work well, they are motivated, and they bring a lot of energy and desire," he enthuses.

But it is innovation that drives him. François Junod works closely with luxury houses, in particular Van Cleef & Arpels, for whom they produce their most dreamlike and poetic creations, such as the Ondine Fairy or the Bird Fountain. It is the demand for unique pieces from the major jewellery houses that forces him to continue developing his workshop. "The creation of a piece nowadays takes us between four and five years. Even with the use of new 3D design technologies, which certainly facilitate and accelerate the design phase, there is still an incompressible amount of time. The idea is therefore to grow to double its production capacity... from two to four parts per year.

The world of automata has evolved significantly in recent years. During this decade, François Junod has noticed an increase in demand

for these unique creations. This craze is coupled with an improvement in the know-how and quality of the works produced by the craftsmen. The multiplication of animated scenes in watches, for example, bears witness to this enthusiasm for automata and their growing popularity. “I have the impression that the world of automata is being reborn, as it was at the end of the 18th century. It was a profession that had almost disappeared.” He gives the example of China: “There, almost nobody makes automata any more. When you show them an android, it’s as if they are discovering the very existence of these objects for the first time, whereas previously there was a huge amount of know-how.

One of the most rewarding aspects for François Junod in creating his animated sculptures is the wonder they evoke in the public. “The automatons appeal to children and adults alike. Whether you show automata in Singapore, Paris or London, the fascination is the same. That’s what I like about it. It’s a universal language.

In the heart of his mountain workshop, Junod works fervently and meticulously on each element of his creations. He confides: “The design of a new automaton always begins with a scene, a setting, a script. We think about what is going to happen, what the object is going to accomplish, what story it is going to tell. Junod’s creative process is based on the art of astonishing and marvelling. He adds: “My aim is to create surprise. The automaton must fade away behind the magic of the scene. I want to create something that the audience has never seen before. At least that I have never seen before.

Models play an essential role in the design of the automata. Junod stresses the importance of proportions, making sure there is “no huge fairy against a tiny flower, or the other way around.” Each animation, each mechanism is first tested individually before being assembled on a general model, until everything works harmoniously. Many factors have to be taken into account such as the size of the springs, the power and precision of the movements. “Each

object presents unique challenges. Final materials, such as metals or precious stones, are only used at the end to avoid damage or waste.”

Among the masterpieces that have marked his career, perhaps the most celebrated is his Pushkin writer. This 55-kilogram android prodigy is capable of randomly drawing six different designs and composing nearly 1,458 separate poems. Its torso, made of 88 metal cams, shows the meticulousness and patience required to produce these unparalleled objects. Commissioned by a wealthy Silicon Valley collector, it also confirms the appeal of his objects to new audiences. “In the 1980s, people were mainly interested in old automata that needed to be restored; today, it is the more complex and sophisticated contemporary creations that are more popular,” observes François Junod.

This craze fuels our magician’s need to keep drawing and creating. “At the end of each creation, there is a kind of nostalgia that sets in for a few days,” he confides. “Fortunately, you are quickly carried away to a new adventure, to new challenges.” Mechanics continue to fascinate him. “There are still things I would like to try out.” Like the tungsten cables made in the United States, which are used in aeronautics, robotics and aerospace and which are used, for example, to deploy solar panels on satellites. “I think that if we were in the late 18th century and the craftsmen of the time had access to these materials, they would use them. And these are materials that never wear out,” analyses François Junod, still driven by this unflinching fascination for time.

Junod’s work is also a tribute to the history of automata — a subject on which he is inexhaustible. But this does not prevent him from always being resolutely turned towards the future. “I see nothing negative in using new technologies to develop new mechanical processes. On the

Mechanical art

This year, GemGenève is devoting its temporary exhibition space to automata, objets d’art and music boxes. Revealing mechanical treasures from the collections of the Geneva Museum of Art and History (MAH), this presentation offers the opportunity to admire works that bear witness to the talent and ingenuity of craftsmen of the past and present.

A total of 25 small and medium-sized pieces, created at the turn of the 19th century, are on display. These works, from the collections of the MAH, are complemented by objects from the Musée international d’horlogerie de La Chaux-de-Fonds, creations by François Junod as well as some of the treasures of the GemGenève exhibitors. Together, they form a captivating and diversified panorama of watchmaking and mechanical art.

The automata, the centrepieces of the exhibition, have a complex status, combining technique, history, philosophy and often magic. These unique pieces evoke scenes of everyday life, folk or exotic tunes or articulated genre scenes. Their origins lie in the invention of the music box principle by the Geneva watchmaker Antoine Favre. This innovation consisted in replacing the complex mechanism of the gongs and hammers of the bell chimes by steel blades vibrating in contact with pins placed on a cylinder. At GemGenève, the magic happens!

La fontaine aux oiseaux, François Junod
Courtesy François Junod. GemGenève





François Junod dans son atelier devant *La fée Ondine*

Courtesy François Junod. GemGenève



STUDIO

contrary, they are fantastic tools,” he says. “I like to adapt current technology and materials to make models and developments. He uses the latest simulation tools and 3D printers to make prototypes of his cams. This allows him to save time and test several mechanisms before making them in metal. Here again, wire cutters and five-axis machines have found their way into his automata...

...while remaining at the door of his workshop. Calm and serenity are crucial to the craftsman and he wouldn't trade them for any ease of execution. “Digital technology has one major flaw: the noise pollution it creates. I think that manual work and the calm of the workshop contribute to the authenticity and magic of our automata.” So, around him, only a few pointers, milling machines and lathes whose discretion is appreciated. He has a weakness for machines from the 1940s and 1960s, which offer “better rigidity, less vibration and better balancing.” Junod does not hesitate to call on his colleagues or the local Technopôle on a regular basis and thus contributes to the town's economy.

Over the years, François Junod has established himself as a key player in the world of automata. By combining art and mechanics, he perpetuates a precious cultural heritage, creating works that amaze enthusiasts around the world. “This mixture of sculpture and mechanics has become unusual.” His unique creations, the result of meticulous work and boundless audacity, will continue to fascinate future generations and perpetuate the art of the automaton throughout the world.

As for his workshop, this timeless place where past and present meet to give birth to extraordinary creations, it retains the charm of the workshops of yesteryear while having the life and energy of today's Fablab. “People who come here often tell me that they come away transformed.” An enchanting place between tradition and modernity.

AMA





MARRIOTT



7 carat old cut cushion diamond

Courtesy David & Sohn. GemGenève

GEMMOLOGY, AT THE CENTRE OF DEBATES

The outline of a future gemmology think tank is taking shape at GemGenève. The Association Gemmologie & Francophonie is organising a first working session dedicated to sustainability. A brand new magazine, *Gemmes*, is launched.

In the short history of the GemGenève show, the Association Gemmologie & Francophonie is already a regular feature. Since November 2021, it has been bringing its thoughts to the heart of the event in the form of round tables bringing together experts and gemologists. The idea? To sift through current events on subjects that put the future and ethics of the profession into perspective. “Gemmology facing social, environmental and scientific challenges”, “Colour in gemmology: nature and culture” or “Between science and commerce, what the names of stones say about us”. These are all cutting-edge themes that have been addressed at previous meetings to enrich the debate and stimulate new ideas across the sector.

“For each edition of GemGenève, we organise registered round tables that allow us to invite the most varied panels possible,” recalls Chloé Picard, gemmologist and co-founder of the association. “This year, the show’s organisers suggested that we develop a different format in the form of a working session reserved for professionals in order to debate and exchange views on the challenges facing our professions. Our objective is to explore concrete avenues and to report on these exchanges during future editions of GemGenève or in our magazine.”

The show, where representatives of all the jewellery professions converge, is the ideal setting for this brand new think tank, which is intended to meet from one edition to the next. Scheduled for Friday 12 May, the first working session will deal with the thorny subject of “What is sustainability in

jewellery?” A question that has been on the lips of professionals in the sector in recent years.

“After Covid, there was a resumption of commercial activity, but there are still challenges and problems to be solved: the players are torn between the needs of customers, the need to produce and sources that are not always totally transparent,” says Chloé Picard, who has written an article on this subject in the association’s new magazine, *Gemmes*, the first issue of which was published in April. She continues: “The whole question is: how can we improve things? How can I act, both as an individual and as a professional in the sector, to enhance the value of these natural stones that we love so much?”

Reserved for about twenty people, on a voluntary basis, this first working session invites dealers, gemologists, historians, major houses, and students to come and reflect, explore ideas, and look for concrete solutions to the challenges and problems of this market.

Round table: Gems supply

As a complement to its working session on sustainability, the Association Gemmologie & Francophonie is proposing a round table on the theme of “Gem sourcing for jewellery and watchmaking”. The issue of sourcing is inseparable from the question of the traceability of stones and materials, and is as much a question of creation and marketing as it is of the science of materials, whether it be their resistance, their longevity or their solidity. Entrusted to three of the founding members of the association, the moderation of this round table will be led by Marie Chabrol (journalist, gemmologist and professor at the Institut de Bijouterie de Saumur), Chloé Picard (gemmologist) and Martial Bonnet (gemmologist and president of the Association Gemmologie & Francophonie).

promoting sustainable development... Over the years, the association has set itself a number of objectives, with the aim of becoming “a centralising player for the various initiatives in French-speaking countries”. Until the idea of creating a dedicated media emerged. “We had already developed a website and social networks, but we wanted to go further,” says Marie Chabrol. “We wanted to create a medium that was not necessarily for the general public, but which would be open to as many people as possible in the gemmology sector, while still being highly focused. Finally, we launched the project last November. It took us five months of intensive work to produce this biannual publication, which is free of charge and available in PDF format on our website.”

“Our desire to create this magazine, which will be digital at first, stems from several observations, the first being to fill a gaping hole left by the absence of a French-language magazine in our field in Switzerland,” writes Martial Bonnet, the association’s president. “The second reason lies in one of the words in the title of our association, la francophonie! There are journals and newsletters in French-speaking countries, but nothing exists to centralise research, data and goodwill.”

To guarantee the scientific seriousness of the articles submitted for publication, the association has set up an editorial board and a reading committee in the manner of scientific journals. “We have a good

This desire to integrate thinking and expertise from across the sector is at the very origin of this association, founded in 2017 by a group of gemologist friends who trained at the DU of Gemmology, within the faculty of sciences and techniques at the university of Nantes, and who all share a passion for beautiful stones. “It’s a totally friendly association, with no hierarchy between us,” says Marie Chabrol, one of the co-founders of this structure, which straddles France and Switzerland. We realised that although there were independent gemmological structures, there were none that federated the French-speaking world. Basing it in Geneva was an obvious choice, both historically and symbolically, because of Switzerland’s neutrality and its commitment to the French-speaking world.

France and Switzerland. Without rushing: “We create our projects step by step,” says Marie Chabrol. “If a project works, then we move on to the next one. When it started, the association decided to organise gemmology weekends, once a year on the Gstaad estate, alternating mini-conferences on Saturdays, convivial dinners and cultural walks.” The formula is a great success. “We always do things in a friendly spirit, but with a scientific basis,” Marie Chabrol continues. She adds: “Everything was done gradually. We were very attached to the annual weekend, especially when we couldn’t meet during Covid. We contacted GemGenève and organised a first round table, which was well received. We never rushed into our projects. They are on a human scale, controllable... The objective being to build and do things together.”

Supporting French-speaking initiatives, organising symposiums, enhancing the value of the professions, building a collection of samples from the gem-growing areas of the French-speaking world,

Taking its time

To fill the gap, the idea was quickly born of bringing together various gemmological initiatives in the Francophonie family, such as schools, laboratories, research centres, dealers and lapidaries from Canada, Belgium,

Gemmology is a very encyclopaedic discipline, as it touches on a majority of fields, from the natural sciences (mineralogy, crystallography, physics and chemistry...) to the humanities (geography, history...) and of course the fields of arts and markets.

— *Martial Bonnet*

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GEMMES

La revue de l'association
Gemmologie & Francophonie

GEMMOLOGIE DE LABORATOIRE

- Nouvelles considérations sur la sodalite-hackmanite de la région de Mogok, Myanmar

DILIGENCE & IMPACT

- Le chemin de la durabilité

AU COEUR DES GEMMES

- Inclusions communes et rares dans l'aigue-marine



GEMMOLOGIE
ET FRANCOFONIE

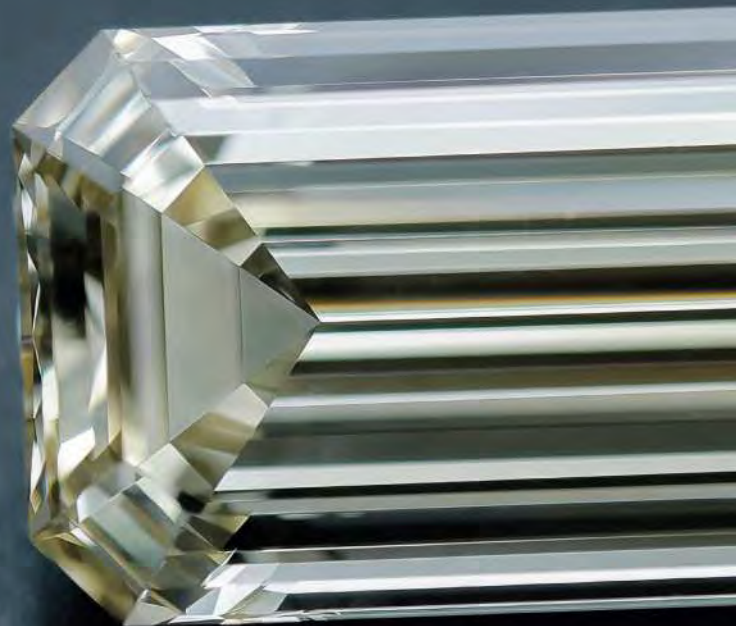
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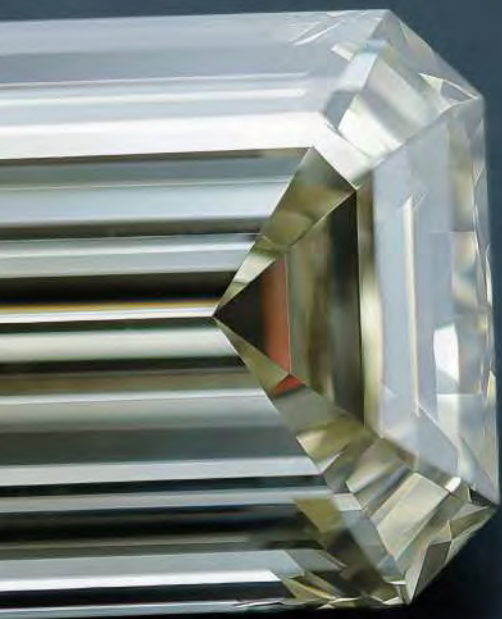
network and ideas for authors, but we are also open to all proposals or spontaneous submissions if the article has a gemological vocation in the broad sense,” adds Marie Chabrol. “It can be a paper on the history of jewellery, the market, traceability, as long as the review is anonymous. In fact, we apply the system of the major scientific journals where we don’t know who wrote or who did the proofreading to avoid conflicts of interest and to have a neutral opinion.”

The editorial line is also taking shape step by step, section by section. “We have opened a section devoted to laboratory gemmology, where mainly geological researchers, crystallographers and even collectors express themselves,” explains Chloé Picard. “This allows them to write a paper that is not too doctoral and adapted to the popularisation — even if I don’t like the term — of laboratory gemmology, which is not always very digestible even for other gemologists.”

The first issue thus devotes an article to the design of diamonds in the laboratory written by H el ene Bureau, director of research at the CNRS attached to the Institute of Mineralogy, Physics of Materials and Cosmochemistry. “Laboratory experiments at high pressures and temperatures are used to understand the genesis of diamonds in the depths of the Earth,” she explains in her abstract. “To achieve this goal, we grow diamonds similar to natural diamonds, i.e. with the same type of impurities as those found in natural diamonds. We show that natural diamonds of different morphologies: single crystal, fibrous, coated, polycrystalline, all grow in the same type of fluids in the earth’s lithosphere.” These are captivating studies that this latest journal in the galaxy of scientific publications proposes to introduce to enthusiasts.

AMA





Emerald cut diamonds
Courtesy SRK. GemGenève



PORTFOLIO



Katerina Perez
Courtesy Katerina Perez, GemGenève

THE ART OF STAYING TRUE TO ONESELF

This is the secret of Katerina Perez, a talented blogger known for her passion for jewellery. With her website katerinaperez.com, this young Russian woman living in Paris has become a respected voice in the world of high-end jewellery.

Her impeccable look and controlled appearance are evident at first glance. Katerina Perez leaves nothing to chance, and this requirement is also reflected in the choice of high jewellery pieces that she selects: a design that is always refined, with coloured stones. From diamond-encrusted necklaces to gold bracelets, she has a flawless ability to highlight the beauty of the jewellery, but also the craftsmanship of each piece.

But Katerina Perez is much more than just a jewellery lover. She is also an accomplished content creator, a journalist 2.0 and a skilled storyteller, able to weave narratives that capture the essence of the pieces she selects. Her articles are more than just product descriptions – they are windows into the world of fine jewellery, filled with historical accounts and personal anecdotes. For her, “jewellery is a true work of art. And like all works of art, they tell a story. It is a form of self-expression.”

Multiple inspirations

Active on social networks, especially on Instagram, which she has used as a playground since 2013, she shares her latest finds, stolen moments from her life and work. She reveals tips for jewellery collectors in need of inspiration. She has built a loyal community of followers who appreciate her vision of jewellery and her ability to spot trends and showcase emerging designers.

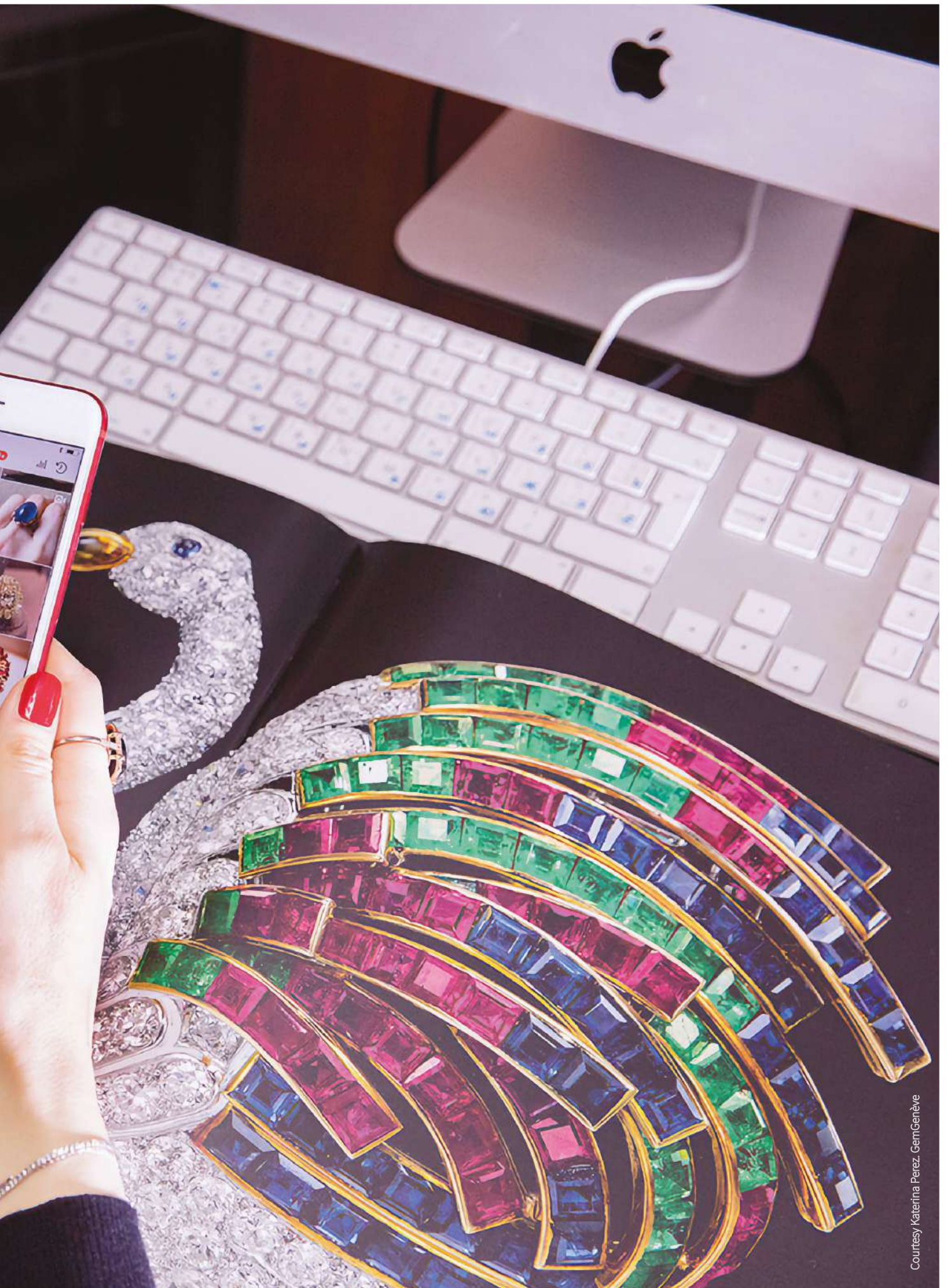
This passion comes from her paternal grandmother, who had a collection of costume jewellery. “My childhood memories are full of precious moments. I never got tired of playing with my

grandmother’s jewellery. I particularly remember an aventurine necklace. In the eyes of a child, it was a real treasure,” recalls Katerina Perez.

As a young woman, she left Russia for England and began her career in the world of high jewellery by working in the field for major brands based in London such as Tiffany & Co, Chaumet and Mauboussin, in the *chic* Mayfair district on New Bond Street. “I wanted to communicate not only the technical characteristics of the jewellery, but also the inspiration behind its creation and the skills needed to make it. I noticed at the time that there was little information on this subject, or even a lack of understanding, because the jewellery was not highlighted enough,” confides the young influencer.

In 2013, she launched herself and created her blog. “I was born to do this job,” she says with strength and conviction. Her knowledge forged in the field allows her to become professional while keeping a very personal approach. Since then, she has enjoyed growing success, building a strong and influential





Courtesy Katerina Perez, GemGenève

Jewellery bloggers and influencers were not considered very much ten years ago, but I persisted with the encouragement of my clients. I have refined my style. By sharing my writing and photography, I wanted to inspire women. Jewellery is above all an emotion, a sparkle. — *Katerina Perez*

brand in the jewellery industry. Surrounded today by a team of ten people, she has built her business around three axes: Instagram, a reference website and a consulting activity.

Around jewellery, for jewellery

Katerina Perez has developed a style all her own; the young woman often puts herself on stage while democratising jewellery. Her account displays a neat aesthetic, with a palette of soft and luminous colours that evoke the world of jewellery. She takes particular care with the lighting, which is always impeccable and plays wonderfully on the fire of the stones. Her visuals highlight the slightest detail, the transparency, the sparkles... simply the beauty of the jewels, attracting rave reviews from a responsive and caring community. She doesn't stop there, often giving style, fashion and beauty advice such as highlighting the clothing brand Hellessy which incorporates pearls into its collections or her advice on investing in jewellery.

As for the website, it is more like a platform, a narrative space around jewellery and for jewellery. It offers an abundance of in-depth articles, classified by theme, papers on industry trends and emerging designers. Katerina Perez also shares exclusive interviews with leading experts, designers and personalities, providing a wealth of information for anyone interested in jewellery.

She now has a community of nearly 500,000 followers on Instagram, which she monetises “through advertising, collaborations and partnerships”. On the menu, the presentation of exclusive collections of jewellery or rare pieces, the launch of new products... Katerina Perez still lends her face for events. In parallel, the young woman does a lot of consulting for brands and designers, always with a tailored approach. “I deal with brand-related issues as well as communication and visibility problems or even creative issues,” she confides. During the first lockdown, she launched a series of online courses, the last pillar of her activity. She continues: “I have accumulated a lot of knowledge that I can now share: for example how to perform on Instagram or get commercial returns.”

Elegant eclecticism

“My job is to anticipate needs and understand jewellery trends,” she says. Katerina is inexhaustible on the subject. With more than ten years of knowledge in the field, she is often asked to speak at events around the world. For the second year in a row, she is collaborating with the GemGenève trade show. She presents her favourite pieces to her digital audience and also moderates conferences.

Katerina Perez is a regular at fashion events, often sharing photos of herself wearing designer outfits. A perfectionist, she is very attentive to detail and often wears exceptional jewellery to compliment her outfit, highlighting the importance and beauty of jewellery in fashion. “Women are by nature chameleons, so my collection includes jewellery for all occasions,” she says.

“I like bold combinations of gemstones, fine stones and other materials. In particular emeralds — which suit my skin tone — and amethysts.” If she had to name a jewellery brand that perfectly illustrates this mix-and-match approach that she loves above all else, it would be the creations of the German jeweller Hermmele, whose models are often characterised by a pure and elegant form, but with a touch of originality that makes them unique thanks to the combination of different materials and colours. An elegant eclecticism that is her signature.



Katerina Perez
Courtesy Katerina Perez, GemGenève

FEUILLICOLLAGE

Louis Vuitton Foundation

Courtesy Paul Gaudriault



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MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE: ON THE WAY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Since 2022, European museums have reported difficulties in dealing with the energy crisis. As the situation has become critical at the beginning of the year, institutions are compelled to scrutinise their expenses, which also reside in the architecture and the very structure of their buildings.

In Strasbourg, the decision last October to close the city's museums two days a week caused quite a stir. In Italy, the MAXXI in Rome reduced its opening hours by two hours, while in Germany, Claudia Roth, Minister of State for Culture, vowed to maintain the country's cultural offerings at all costs. Since the end of 2022, European institutions have had to take measures to cope with the increase in their energy expenses, as much due to intense consumption peaks since the end of the health crisis as to price increases resulting from the war in Ukraine.

This pressure has highlighted the interest in an accelerated ecological transition to reduce costs induced by energy consumption, where the use of renewable sources and the reduction of carbon footprint go hand in hand. As the activities of a museum involve a large number of elements requiring significant and continuous amounts of energy, it is clear that the very architecture of buildings has long neglected to take such issues into account. What about today?

The first museums

It was during the 18th century that the first museums appeared in Europe, built around curiosity cabinets and private collections. By the end of the century, two models emerged: the Pio-Clementino Museum in the Vatican and the Museum Fridericianum in Kassel. They combined functional principles — in the display of works with, for example, paintings associated with rooms and sculptures with galleries — and symbolic principles — embodied by the dome, reflecting the sacred space of knowledge and memory.

In 1802, the ideas of architect and theorist Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand gave birth to new

institutions in Europe and introduced new materials such as iron in their construction. In the mid-19th century, this momentum found its concrete forms in the use of glass, cast iron, or steel. The space and architectural ambition of museums allowed for real revolutions in the urban landscape.

The expansion and gradual diversification of inalienable museum collections raised the issue of storage and conservation space. In the mid-20th century, Le Corbusier offered modern solutions with the concept of the “museum of unlimited growth,” the possibilities of internal rearrangements allowing it to adapt to any evolution.

Contemporary museum architecture oscillates between a neutral framework aiming to enhance the collections it contains and the architectural work, like the spiral structure of the Guggenheim in New York, built in 1959. Following the same trend, the Guggenheim Bilbao, created in 1997, was designed by Frank Gehry, who has been involved in numerous museum projects where form dissociates from function: the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris or





Guggenheim Bilbao

Photo Pedro Sanz

the LUMA Foundation in Arles. He is, of course, not the only one. Because the museum also allows its architect to propose a vision, their own. But what place is given to ecology and sustainable development in these projects?

Environmental awareness

In museums, the issue of the environment emerges in the 20th century. Initially presented in the form of scientific knowledge, climate is introduced through its role in the various stages of the planet’s transformation. The human impact on it is not yet considered, and knowledge remains limited.

While the environment is present in the themes addressed by the museum, it appears in an informative and educational context. The social role of such an institution truly emerges in the 1960s. It then becomes a place of education, pedagogy, and opens up to ecology, stimulated by the nascent dialogue between the exhibited works and the public.

In 1992, the UNESCO-ICOM Museum Information Centre published a list of works dealing with the subject. The discourse turns towards ecological awareness and awakens to the direct impact of museum practices on the environment. In the United States, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) created the Committee on Environment and Sustainability in 1994 — which became the Green Alliance in 2008 — and proposed sustainable development standards in good museum practices. The same year, the Association of European Museums (AEM) undertook steps allowing a report on the sustainable museum to be published.

Although museum networks and organisations have committed to reducing their environmental impact and adopting sustainable practices since the 1990s, there remains a gap between widespread awareness and its implementation. It is not until the 2000s, at least, that the ecological

impact of museum architecture can begin to be taken into account, as demonstrated by the Pompidou-Metz Centre in France, opened in 2010.

Energy expenses

Initially constrained by the capacity of their reception spaces facing an ever-growing audience and by their storage potential for works of art, museums now also undertake renovation projects to meet the need to develop more sustainable practices. In particular, old buildings represent significant challenges, often requiring costly restructuring.

Building operation and maintenance, lighting and temperature control, artwork transportation... A museum’s activities require significant and continuous amounts of energy. From a sustainable development perspective, all these elements need to be analysed and rethought, including the building’s thermal performance, heating and air conditioning systems, internal and external human circulation, water and fluid management, waste production... even the products offered for sale in the museum shop or its dining area.

Similarly, artwork conservation raises questions: how can museum architecture take into account the expansion of collections over the long term and their progressive deterioration? Because if it is to be sustainable, the museum’s structure must not only provide the most ecological reception space possible but also inevitably take into account the objects it contains.

Sustainable museum

For museums, the concept of sustainable development is closely linked to the implementation of preventive conservation policies. As the *raison d’être* of these institutions, the works they contain are heavily dependent on the environment in which they are preserved: it is about taking care of the outside to protect the inside.

First developed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites

(ICOMOS) in 1980 within the framework of international conferences on the conservation of cultural heritage, the concept of preventive conservation emphasises measures against deterioration. It is no longer just about limiting conservation to artwork restoration.

To achieve this, a museum’s structure can take into account a variety of parameters that allow it to respect the environment while protecting its collections as best as possible. The architect can optimise the natural terrain, use natural ventilation, or install photovoltaic panels. The construction materials generally strike a balance between durability, non-toxicity, recycling, renewability, and low-pollution manufacturing. However, insulation remains a problem, as animal- or plant-based insulators are flammable and attract insects. Finally, the structure’s modularity sometimes comes into play in the design to allow for interior rearrangements.

The “High Environmental Quality” (HQE) approach, established in France in the 1990s, facilitates the implementation of such principles in architecture. The initiative has international repercussions, later integrated into the BREEAM environmental certification system for buildings in the United Kingdom. Today considered a benchmark in sustainable construction, it is often one of the criteria in architectural calls for projects for museums, as was the case for the Quai Branly Museum in Paris.

Many museums around the world have not yet embarked on this transition — notably, the Guggenheim Museum in Abu Dhabi has faced significant criticism for its construction — however, ecological initiatives are increasing, and research for sustainable development is constantly evolving, posing new challenges for architects. Although this awareness is still recent, it is indeed gaining momentum, whether among the public, cultural actors, researchers or engineers, all in search of new solutions.



Fondation LUMA
Photo Clemens van Lay



Centre Pompidou Metz

Photo Frédéric Lo Brutto





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