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A La Vieille Russie Showcases 250 Years Of Earrings



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Watches & Jewelry

I write about modern and antique fine jewelry.

Art Deco Topaz and Diamond Earrings. American, ca. 1930.



Part of the Ear Candy Exhibit at A La Vieille Russie- a pair of Art Deco Diamond and Topaz earrings A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE

My grandmother was a wise woman who lived until 97. Every day she put on earrings and lipstick and tried to teach me that these are two of things that a woman should never leave the house without. It wasn't vanity but her belief "that earrings add a sparkle that allows you to shine and that lipstick makes you smile brighter." A private person, who endured many difficult times in her life, she also believed that "When you go out looking your best, the rest of the world won't know how you are feeling, even if your heart is breaking."

These days, when we are out or with other people in person with masks on, lipstick is definitely not an option so we need to rely on earrings to light up our face, cheer us up and never let people know what we are feeling behind our masks when we can't push back the fear or challenges of the pandemic and daily life. But we can wear lipstick when we need to during a zoom meetings along with fabulous earrings.

I tell you this little anecdote because A La Vieille Russie's Fall Exhibition, *Ear Candy: 250 Years of Style*, which opened on November 10 and runs through December 24th couldn't be more perfect for the times we are living in. It also can transport us to another time, whether it be the romance and sentimentality of the Georgian Era or the bold vibrant times of the mid-twentieth century. Over 40 pairs of earrings are on display and depict Georgian, Victorian, Art Nouveau, Edwardian/Belle Epoque, Retro 40s styles up until looks that represent modern times. You can meet in person by appointment at A La Vieille Russie's NYC gallery located at 745 Fifth Avenue, see the selection online at ALVR.com or work with a sales associate from the shop virtually.

In speaking with Peter Schaffer Director of A La Vieille Russie, I asked him why he chose this exhibit for Holiday 2020?

"People have always loved earrings – one reason being that of course they will emphasize the wearer's mood but also because they make an immediate statement. Especially now with masks hiding facial expressions, it is a perfect foil. Earrings are extremely versatile and offer insight into one's personality. For instance, one may not arrive at a job interview dripping in diamonds but that's exactly what they'd want for a night out, or in current times, a zoom party. We're lucky that in this exhibition we have pairs that really run the gamut from high-glam to understated elegance. "

Shaffer also gave me the scoop on some highlights from the exhibition that have amazing provenance or are in excellent condition and are extremely early in time period:

Can you give us a little more information about the Georgian pendeloque earrings and some of the other earlier pieces?

“Eighteenth century earring designs counterbalanced the exaggerated updo's of the period. The pendeloque earrings in our exhibition are the stylistic descendent of the girandole style. There were also a couple of technological factors that lead to the popularity of diamond jewelry at this time, like improvements to faceted cutting techniques, and improvements to domestic lighting. Better candlelight permitted social events to take place in the evening, and diamond jewels were the perfect, sparkling accessory. We have a pair of garnet pendant transformable earrings that are a nice example of Georgian jewelry. Then we also have a larger Victorian pair of diamond transformable earrings that really show the continuity of having options with your jewelry by having two pairs in one.”

**Georgian Old-Mine Pavé Diamond Pendeloque Earrings with Bow Accent.
English, ca. 1780.**



A La Vieille RUSSIE Georgian diamond pendeloque earrings from the "Ear Candy" exhibit A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE

Georgian Faceted Garnet Transformable Day-To-Night Pendant Earrings, Set in Gold. English, ca. 1780.



A La Vieille Russie detachable day-to-night flat cut Georgian garnet earrings from the 'Ear Candy' ... [+] A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE



Victorian Old-Mine Diamond Transformable Pendant Earrings. English, ca. 1860 from A La Vieille ... [+] A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE.

I see you have two pairs of earrings from the U.S. Marcus and Company—can you talk about these?

“Marcus and Company were best known for their Art Nouveau pieces and use of colorful gems before it was really considered to be ‘chic and stylish’. The bold use of black opal in the pair from our exhibition really speaks to the company’s creative taste. Their love of color predates the firm to when William Marcus was in business with George Jaques. In 1882, they even penned a pamphlet to encourage the use of colored gems and titled it *Something About Neglected Gems*. They also did a wonderful job of creating the American version of Edwardian/Belle Epoque earrings that were so popular in England and France during the very early 20th century.”

Marcus & Company Black Opal and Diamond Earrings. American, ca. 1910 Art Nouveau Earrings.



Marcus & Company Black Opal and Diamond Earrings. American, ca. 1910. from "Ear Candy Exhibit" A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE



Marcus & Company Edwardian Diamond and Onyx Drop Earrings. American, ca. 1915 from the "Ear Candy" ... [+] A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE

What about the contemporary Diamond, Jade, Onyx and Coral Wasp earrings. They made me do a double take. Are all the elements in them from today?

“This is a perfect example of our ‘recycling’. We saw a broken vintage brooch with jade butterfly wings – perfectly intact – and we came up with the idea to create a pair of earrings so as not to lose the gorgeous jade wings. We recycled them and gave new life to a great pair of jades. This pair is really unique because while we designed and constructed them not that long ago, the stones are antique.”

English contemporary jade, onyx and diamonds, and wasp earrings, Jade stones are antique and reimaged into these modern earrings.



A La Vieille Russie English contemporary jade, onyx and diamonds, and wasp earrings, Jade stones are... [+] A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE

Here are three of my other personal favorites from different time periods:

Etruscan Revival Gold Filigree Pendant Earrings. English, ca. 1830.



Etruscan Revival Gold Filigree Pendant Earrings. English, ca. 1830 from A La Vieille Russie's "Ear ... [+] A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE.

Art Deco Pear-Shaped Diamond Drop Earrings Set in Platinum. English, ca. 1920. This is an update on the earlier pendeloque earrings when we started calling them pendant

earrings, which we still do today.



Pear-Shaped Diamond Drop Earrings Set in Platinum. English, ca. 1920 from A La Vieille Russie's "Ear ... [+]" A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE

Cartier Yellow and White Gold C-Shaped Earrings. Cartier, Paris, ca. 1960. Image courtesy of A La Vieille Russie.



1960. Image courtesy of A La Vieille Russie. Cartier Yellow and White Gold C-Shaped Earrings. ... [+]" A LA VIEILLE RUSSIE.

To see more from the exhibition sale, please go to alvr.com

And remember to wear lipstick and earrings during your zoom meetings and earrings to dress up your mask. I will too—in memory of my grandmother.