

Meet the Collector: Lorraine Evans-Raistrick

Lorraine Evans-Raistrick has been a collector of vintage costume jewellery since she was a little girl. 'My mother gave me a lovely mother of pearl locket with a small silver cross on it and I treasured it for a long time', says Lorraine. 'Once I got older and with all the moves in my life the little locket unfortunately got lost but I will always remember it and this was the beginning of my huge passion for jewellery.' Lorraine took up collecting antique and vintage costume jewellery seriously about 4 years ago.

So what makes jewellery so appealing to Lorraine? 'The designs are incredible, every piece I look at is a work of art and I can see the huge amount of craftsmanship that goes into each hand-made piece', she explains. 'The colours are vibrant, the materials used are high in quality and each piece tells a story. I often wonder who wore these pieces years ago; it could have been worn by a movie star!'

The very first piece Lorraine started her vintage collection with was from a small box of costume jewels passed down to her when her mother-in-law sadly passed away. One piece in particular was the pearl earrings she wore to Lorraine's wedding and all the items remain with her until this day in her private collection. 'Ever since I discovered how remarkable these designs from the past are, I researched the area of antique and vintage costume jewellery. The first piece I bought was from the Elizabeth Taylor for Avon Collection, which is the gilded age ring. As soon as it arrived I knew instinctively that it was going to be my passion and desire to research more and more designers.'

After collecting seriously for four years, Lorraine's collection, which started from around just 10 pieces, has developed into a huge treasure trove consisting of some rare museum quality items. 'Antique and vintage costume jewellery is an exciting learning path. I started out doing some intense research into American costume jewellery and started buying the known designers such as Sarah Coventry, Lisner and Corocraft and then progressed into the more elaborate designs by Trifari, Marcel Boucher, Pennino and Miriam Haskell. Eventually I intend to progress even further into the high end designers', she explains.

At present, Lorraine's favourite piece has to be the bird of paradise by the designer Alfred Philippe for Trifari, 'Although I love all the pieces in my collection and it is difficult to choose just one as my favourite!' laughs Lorraine.

As Lorraine's collection grows and her research intensifies, there are literally hundreds of designs to choose from. However there is a crème de la crème range Lorraine would one day love to own. 'By the late 1920s, House of Cartier were producing some intricate designs using intense colours, rubies, sapphires and emeralds that later earned this style of jewellery the name Tutti Frutti and was often designed for Royalty,' she explains. 'Maybe one day I will be able to afford one piece by Cartier. Amongst the other designers I am currently researching are Gabrielle Coco Chanel, Christian Dior and Yves St Laurent.'

Currently Lorraine is on the look out for a piece by the designer Pennino, including the brooch, earrings and bracelet to make up the full parure for the Autumn Pageantry 1957 design. 'This parure is extremely rare to find, will command a high price and is considered a museum piece', explains Lorraine.

For a beginner starting out, Lorraine recommends joining her Vintage Costume Jewellery Club UK, where collectors can meet other collectors and share the passion for this wonderful subject. ■



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From top:
Vintage signed D'Orlan rhinestone and enamel Bird of Paradise Brooch. Vintage signed Trifari, by designer Alfred Philippe Poinsettia pin. Vintage Austrian crystal domed Floral Brooch. Elizabeth Taylor for Avon Egyptian Cuff. Trifari Coronation Jewels 1953, Sceptre and Earrings. Elizabeth Taylor for Avon Shah Jehan Pendant.