

# Notes on an Obsession

• April 2023 •

by Olivier Dupon



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In this issue, you will find:

- REPOSSI's new Limited Editions.
- MARY KATRANTZOU x BVLGARI Serpenti bejewelled bags.
- JACOB & Co Billionaire Timeless Treasure Watch.
- WIESMANN Project Thunderball.
- CARTIER Libre Tressage 14.
- LOUIS VUITTON Automata watches.
- FORMS Dinosaur bones creations.
- New MESSIKA campaign starring Kendall Jenner & Alton Mason.
- BOODLES, YOKO London and MANOLO BLAHNIK creations for King Charles III Coronation.
- A post WATCHES & WONDERS selection of timepieces.

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Limited Edition N°2 Earrings  
in black gold set with 1.6  
carats of diamonds. POA.



Of all the occasions to rejoice on everyone's calendar (birthdays, anniversaries etc), there is one to add for jewellery lovers. The twice yearly (March and September) Limited Editions by REPOSSI. The concept is to give free reign to the creative studio as long as the outcome reflects the house's DNA and innovative craftsmanship. As for the former, inspirations are always about architecture, modern and tribal arts. Here, the Limited Edition N°2 piece is predominantly echoing ethnic jewellery. It is a pair of earrings; whose shape is part hoop part double-edged blade formed with a hooked point. Their profile is particularly beautiful, proving once again that perfecting shapes and volumes is REPOSSI's forte. The earrings clasp the ear lobe, tattooing a trail of round brilliant-cut diamonds. When it comes to craftsmanship, the feat resides in achieving the most intense shade of black gold that I have ever seen, against which the whiteness of the diamonds pops. With such rarity comes a warning: it is fragile.

And, for the first time, the back of the earrings are open-worked so as to let the light peek through. A limited edition of 15 pieces, you may want to snatch not one, not two but maybe three or more, as stacking two earrings on one side, one on the other could be the fiercest look (as a female warrior collecting her trophies).

[www.repossi.com](http://www.repossi.com)

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Serpenti Tree of Life bag in white. POA.

There are collaborations so successful that it feels like planets are aligned and all is well in the world. The Serpenti bejewelled bag from **MARY KATRANTZOU x BVLGARI** is one of them. A capsule collection that will be available from May 2023 as part of the BVLGARI Resort Collection 2023, and that will be stocked at worldwide boutiques including Capri, Porto Cervo through to Saint Tropez, Monaco, Mykonos, Ibiza, Bodrum, Saint Barth, and beyond. They are all sea-side hotspots since the Serpenti bejewelled bags exude the refined colours of summer blooms, when nature is at its peak. Beyond the mythical creature, BVLGARI's ultimate emblem, it is the garden of Eden that the Greek designer has set her sight on. *"An enchanting world made of lush gardens, blooming flowers, and fascinating creatures, where Bulgari's most iconic signs and jewellery motifs are rebirthed with originality and dare"*, the team says. Besides, it is clear that the bags celebrate Haute Couture work with three-dimensional trompe-l'oeil embroideries interpreting scenes from the natural world, all masterfully executed by the artisans of the Atelier Montex in Paris. The bags are literally dripping with multi-coloured crystals: here flowers bloom all along a branch, there a toucan, a peacock or a humming bird. The degree of details is intoxicating and so is the abundance of glistening stones. The Serpenti bejewelled bags come in turquoise and white (Serpenti Tree of Life bags) or black (Serpenti Midnight Garden); the perfect chromatic backdrops to enhance the vibrant enchanted scenes.

[www.bulgari.com](http://www.bulgari.com)

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Making-of the Serpenti Tree of Life bag; the meticulous embroidery work of the Atelier Montex.

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Serpenti Midnight Garden bag. POA.

Serpenti Tree of Life bag in turquoise. POA.



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This is a company that does not shy away from its target audience: hyper rich individuals. In 2015, unapologetically moving the cursor higher on the ‘bling’ scale, JACOB & Co launched the Billionaire timepiece, meant to be a one-of-a-kind creation at the time. Years in the making and featuring 239 emerald-cut diamonds. The appetite for status pieces not waning, as a second Billionaire iteration came to life (bigger and better with 424 diamonds). Then came a third piece with 714 diamonds, opening a new aesthetic avenue with the introduction of colour (134 rubies) ...which leads to the new Billionaire Timeless Treasure trophy in 2023, an all-yellow diamond watch with a vivid green tsavorite garnet dial. 880 carats of rough yellow diamonds have become 216.89 after thousands of hours of cutting into Asscher cuts. The resulting 425 gems are laid out individually as a mosaic of small dimensions and yet, unprecedented scale. Their Fancy Yellow and Fancy Intense Yellow color is enhanced by the unique green glow of tsavorites. The Billionaire skeleton tourbillon movement is adorned with another 57-yellow baguette-cut diamonds.

On all accounts, it is a record-breaking, most opulent ever watch, which is priced at a mere US\$20M. It is a work of patience; first collecting the yellow diamonds that have a 10,000 to 1 occurrence, and are thus more expensive than white diamonds. Then, positioning the

<https://jacobandco.com>

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larger diamonds for the case (46 of them for a total of 55.15cts) and for the first rows of the 159-carat bracelet. The diamonds’ individual size diminishing in perfectly regular increments as they near the clasp. *“But the gems are not placed according to their original size. Only colour matters here. So, several large stones have been cut with massive waste of matter”*, the team says.

Billionaire Timeless Treasure Watch with an exclusive, Skeleton Jacob & Co, manual winding JCAM39 movement; a 18K yellow gold case set with 46 Asscher-cut yellow diamonds (~ 55.15cts), flange set with 76 kite-cut and emerald-cut tsavorites (3.59cts); a 18K yellow gold bracelet set with 378 Asscher-cut yellow diamonds (~ 159.62cts); total carat weight of 482 Fancy Yellow and Fancy Intense Yellow diamonds (~ 216.89cts) and 76 tsavorites (~ 3.59cts). POA.


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Fasten your seat belt and indulge in the luxury interior of a Project Thunderball car.

The 1965 movie Thunderball (fourth one in the spy hero franchise) sees James Bond “*heading to the Bahamas to recover two nuclear war-heads stolen by S.P.E.C.T.R.E. Agent Emilio Largo in an international extortion scheme*”. Would the British agent have swapped his 1964 Aston Martin DB5 for one of the three new Limited Edition Design Concepts recently unveiled by Luxury German car manufacturer Wiesmann? In partnership with car design studiokurbos, the aptly named Project Thunderball is all about the bespoke personalisation of the car of your dream. Think about Wiesmann as your own Quartermaster (aka Q). The core of the project is a classic two-seat, rear-wheel drive configuration and lightweight carbon fibre construction.

There is Design Concept One – “*The very essence of convertible motoring, inspired by the moment in time when you and your car become one*” – or an invitation to project yourself driving alongside the corniche road between Monte-Carlo and Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat. The bespoke ocean blue metallic paint exterior



evokes the warm coastal waters and endless skies of the Mediterranean summer, while the luxurious interior finished in vibrant orange leathers with soft-touch cream canvas accents and high gloss teak touches all point to a Saint Tropez beach.

Design Concept Two is “*inspired by the Roaring Twenties Gatsby era, when the optimism for the future was symbolised by the pure pleasure of driving*”. The height of the age of modernism mixed in the unbridled opulence and nonchalance of the iconic F. Scott Fitzgerald character, Jay Gatsby. The sophisticated golden / bronze hue exterior, with a grille to match, with a contrasting deep burgundy leather interior (with hints of matte soft-touch velvet details) will resonate with any aesthete.

<https://wiesmann.com>

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Design Concept One; limited edition Project Thunderball. POA.

The German-engineered roadster's dynamics have been achieved by packaging the two electric motors in a rear-mid mounted position, which have a targeted total output of 500kW (680hp) and 1,100 Nm of instant torque to deliver a targeted 0-62mph

(0-100km/h) acceleration time of just 2.9 seconds. Powering the motors is a state-of-the-art, 800-volt, 92kWh lithium-ion battery pack. This enables an exceptional targeted range of 500km (WLTP), alongside the convenience of super-fast charging of up to 300kW (DC).

Design Concept Two; limited edition Project Thunderball. POA.


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Design Concept Three; limited edition Project Thunderball. POA.

Design Concept Three, *“like a stealth shadow across the sky, she slides silent into view”*, could well roam the streets of Gotham city. The matt black exterior is enhanced with black gloss details. The interior showcases the purpose and power of the vehicle with matt black leather contrasted with anodized features and gloss carbon fibre surrounds,

in order to unearth the super hero within us. Roheen Berry, Owner and CEO of Wiesmann says that *“Project Thunderball is particularly special, not only because of its timeless design and disruptive specifications, but also because it firmly anchors this new phase of Wiesmann in the luxury automotive industry and beyond”*.

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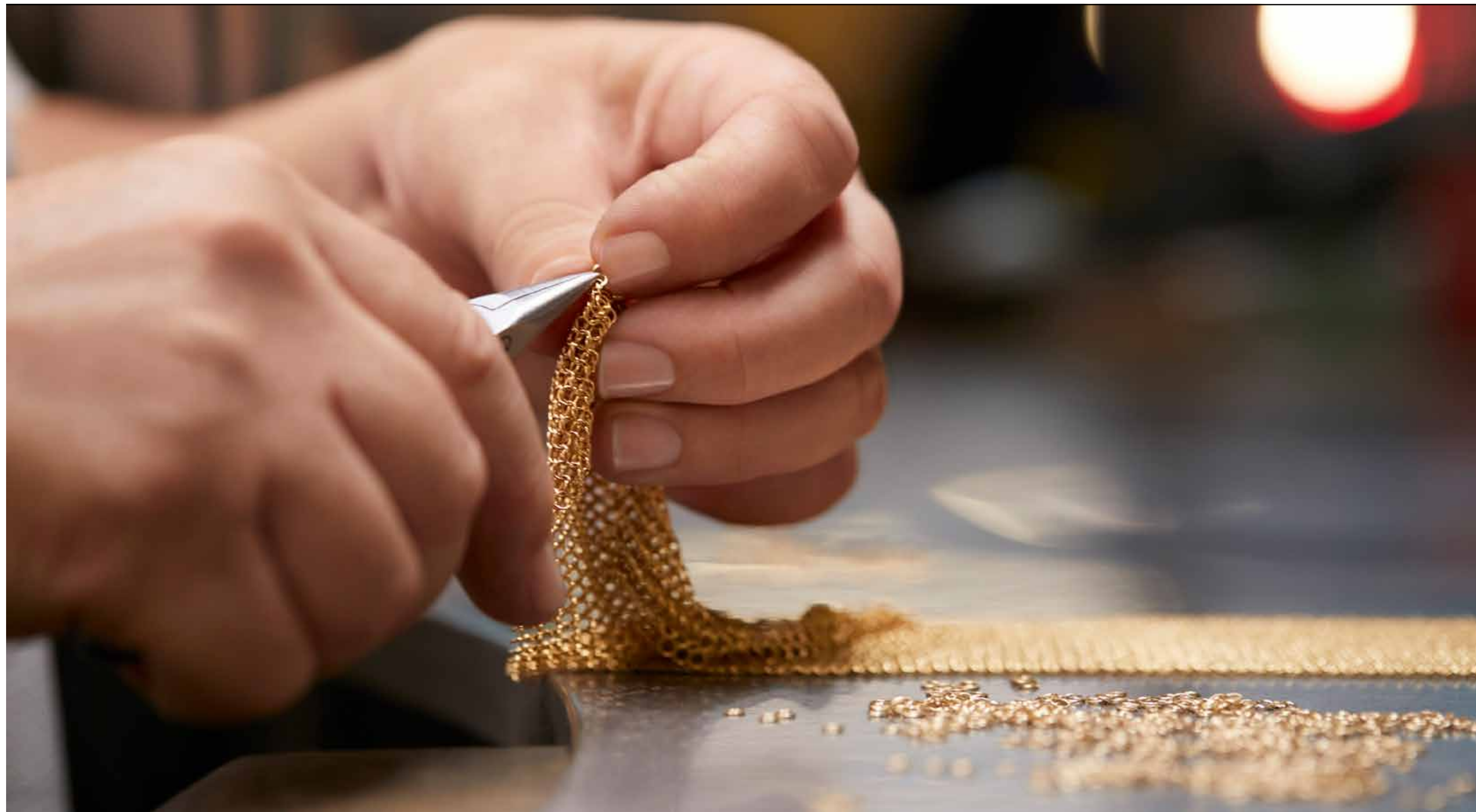


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Making-of the chainmail for the CARTIER Libre Tressage 14.

CARTIER Libre Tressage 14 redefines the frontiers between jewellery and apparel by presenting a limited edition piece that becomes a decorative structure that hangs on the body. The fluid cape has a distinctive avant-garde vibe. *“It transforms into a flowing jewellery set, which starts with a choker before twirling around the neck. The sleeves can be detached to create a bib-style necklace. Within this single piece, there is both a cape with pendants and a close-fitting cabaret outfit”*, the team explains. In any case, its bold impact was demonstrated by Zoe Saldana, when she recently wore it at the Vanity Fair Oscars after-party. What appeared as the most striking feature is the silk-like rendering of the creation as it delicately forms fluttering sleeves, while sitting as second skin on the chest. No wonder then that the CARTIER creative studio collaborated with a Parisian fashion stylist, who started by planning the cape as a textile garment (fitted with a zip fastening and detachable sleeves). The transformation into a jewel was made possible thanks to the meticulous contribution of the chain maker, who made a chainmail with a wide weave. In spite of its delicacy, the cape has a shield-like quality, emboldened by the addition of spear-shaped onyx pendants set with diamonds, weights that end the vertical stripes across the chest and keep the mesh-like structure in place.

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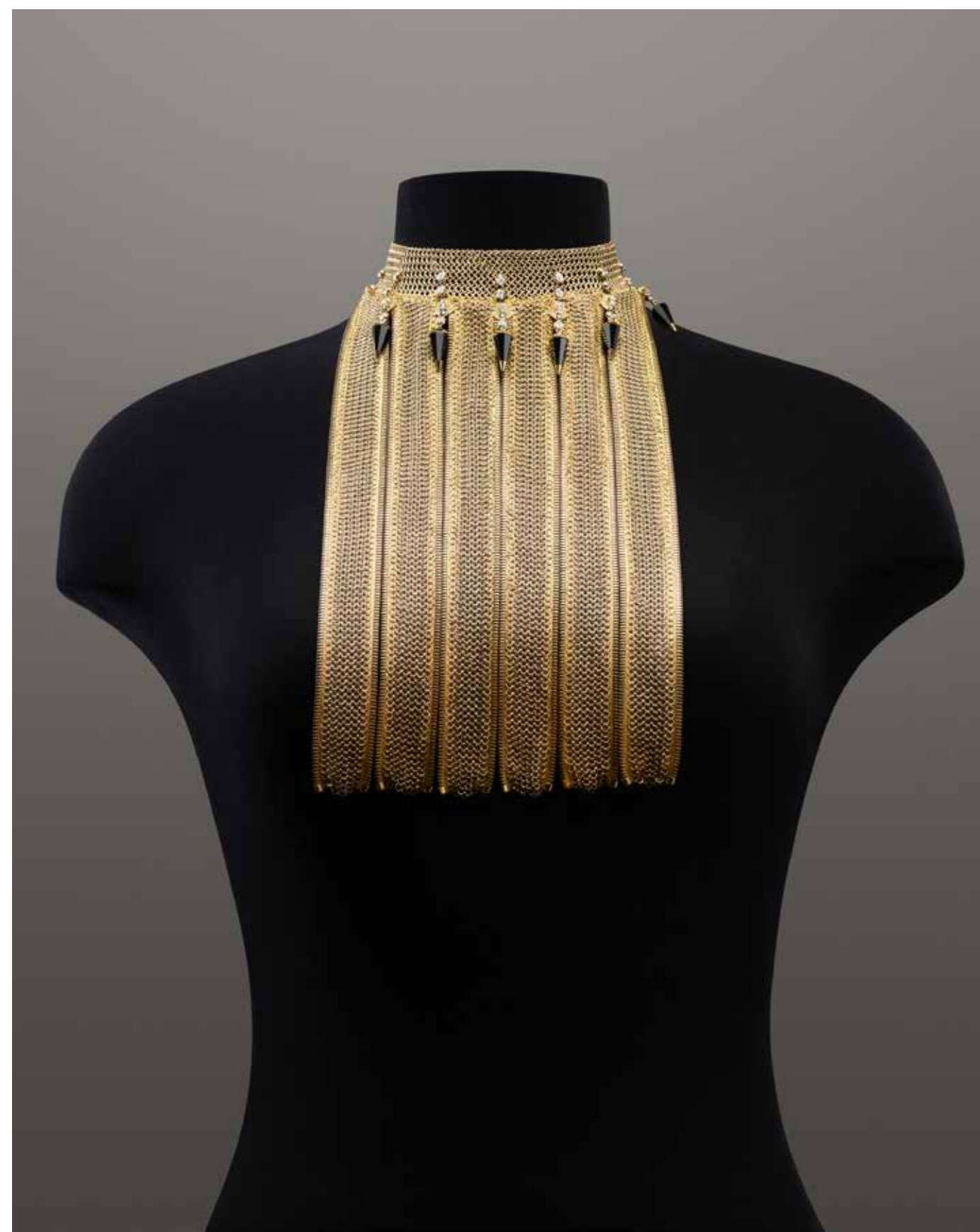
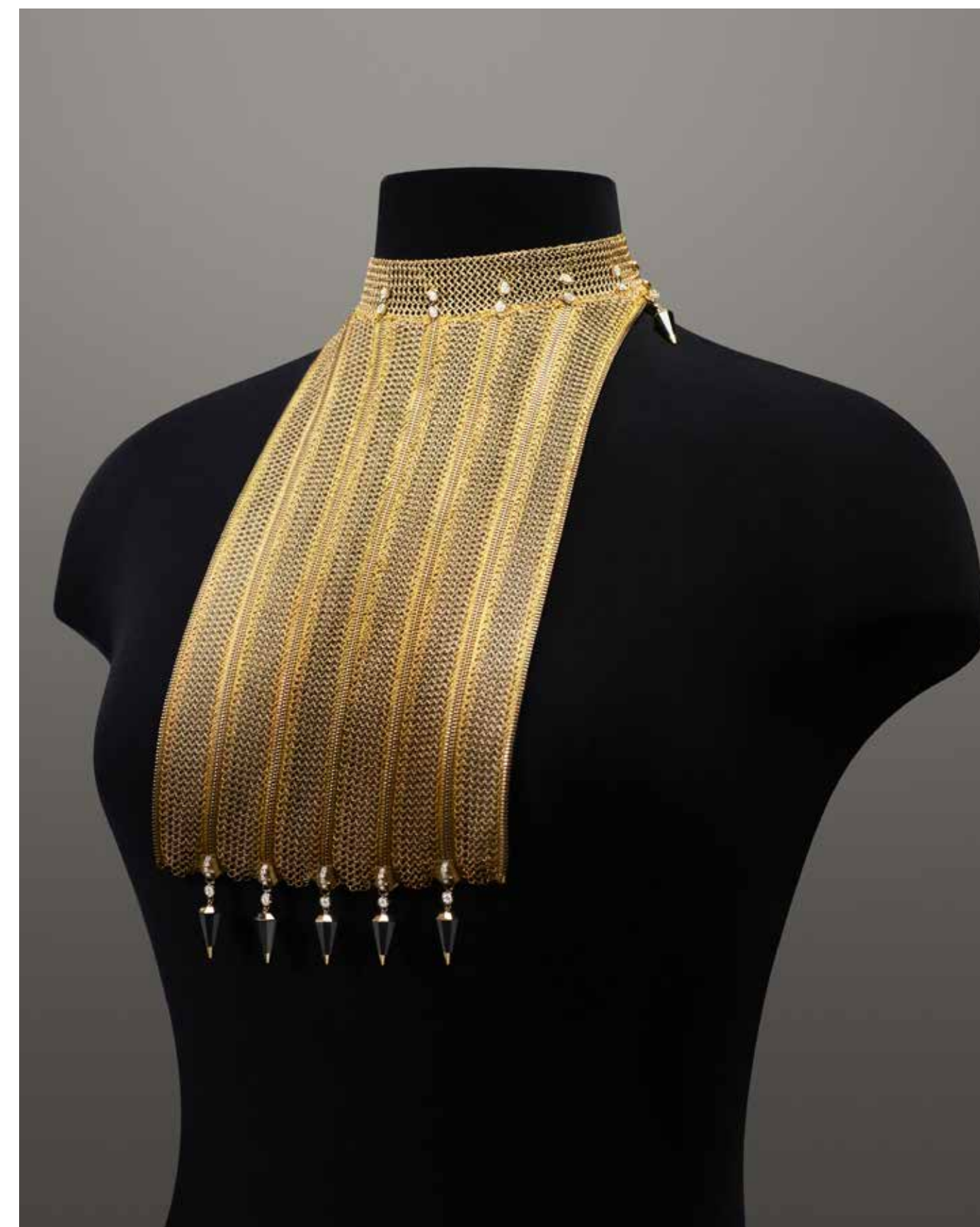


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The transformable CARTIER Libre Tressage 14; limited edition POA.

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You will certainly remember the disruptive LOUIS VUITTON Tambour Carpe Diem watch; a bold, think-out-of-the-box timepiece with a functional automate set with a snake and skull to give the time. Now come two new iterations as much baroque in style, yet probably more ‘elegant’ in theme. Yes, I will focus on the design aspect of the watches more than on their complex and exceptional technicalities (although worthy of an entire article).

In any case, all LOUIS VUITTON Automata watches evoke the world of tattoos. The first is the Tambour Opera Automata which celebrates the Sichuan Opera’s Bian Lian through a red, black and white traditional mask that comes to life and changes expression on demand. Through a 16-second spectacle, it evokes the ancestral prowess of Chinese Bian Lian actors who perform putting on up to twenty different masks in a fraction of a second, “*revealing their wide range of expressions. Each has their own technique for making these painted silk figures appear and disappear with a quick hand gesture or a graceful fanning motion*”, the team shares. When the latch is pushed, the engraved pink gold dragon’s head rises to reveal the jumping hours inscribed on the forehead of the cloisonné enamel Bian Lian, while its tail indicates the retrograde minutes. The mask’s expression changes dramatically – its eyebrows frown, its eyelid closes over its left eye, and the pupil of its right eye retracts to reveal a pointed Monogram flower.

[www.louisvuitton.com](http://www.louisvuitton.com)


Tambour Opera Automata Watch. POA.

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The most romantic – or is it dramatic? – of the two iterations is the Tambour Fiery Heart Automata watch. “Beware of thorns” they say. The combination of champlevé and cloisonné enamel has been used to create the various miniature elements on this dial (thorns, roses and hearts). It also features no less than seven animations, which are spurred into action by a gem-set pusher at 8 o’clock. The 13-second animation gear into action the thorns, monogram flowers, the heart, and gold flames. While the thorns emerge and extend from the hour and minutes subdial, the two enamel monograph flowers at the center spin around rapidly. Meanwhile, the flames around the blazing heart fire away, before the heart itself splits open and to reveal the message: ‘Sweet but fierce’. Ta da!

For these two new extraordinary pieces, Louis Vuitton has enlisted the help of some of the greatest contemporary craftsmen. Michel Navas and Enrico Barbasini, Master Watchmakers at

La Fabrique du Temps, created the watch movements, while Anita Porchet, Master Enameller, and Dick Steenman, Master Engraver, decorated the timepieces.

[www.louisvuitton.com](http://www.louisvuitton.com)


Tambour Fiery Heart Automata. POA.

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During this past Tefaf Maastricht edition, first-time participant Hong Kong high jeweller FORMS has unveiled a capsule collection that although harking back to Jurassic times, is a perfect marriage between past and future. Naturally, this struck a chord with the fair organisers, who are tasked to uphold Tefaf's *raison d'être*: bringing ancient and modern treasures together in one place. So, beyond breaking the limit of how rare a material could be, what captivates most is how FORMS continuously position themselves as some of the most avant-garde jewellers by thinking out of the box. In a bold move, their capsule collection pairs fossilised dinosaur bones with precious gemstones. It is not a case of low brow cum highbrow as the bones, which date back millions of years to the Jurassic period, are rare and have been hand-selected. Through fossilisation, minerals such as agate have replaced the bone's original cells; hence, the specific cracked / marbled patterns.

True to FORMS design philosophy, the prehistoric stones have been set with rare gemstones in geometrical ensembles. In squarish stud earrings, a semi-crescent *pavé* of white diamond has been inserted inside a brown and orange agatized dinosaur bone. Oval-shaped unheated Burmese rubies are nestled in the crux of the curves, while smaller rubies delineate the frontier between *pavé* and bone. A matching ring is proposed. In another pair of earrings, a spear of size graded rubies seems to pierce through a greyish bone disk.

A brownish cushion-shaped bone with hints of lilac has been paired with bright blue unheated sapphires (the larger central gem that is visually extended on either side, all along the shank and ring). According to Tefaf's closing statement, we learn that FORMS have sold some of the Dinosaur marvels to Dutch, Belgian and German buyers. Hurry up!

[www.forms-hk.com](http://www.forms-hk.com)

Earrings in 18K white gold set with two unheated Burmese rubies (6.01cts), a buffed cushion agatized dinosaur bone (26.92cts), diamonds (2.62cts) and rubies (0.97ct). POA.



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Ring in platinum set with one unheated oval sapphire (3.21cts), a buffed cushion agatised dinosaur bone (13.93cts), sapphires (1.00ct). POA.

Earrings in 18K white gold set with Burmese rubies (5.90cts), a buffed disk agatised dinosaur bone (68.81cts) and rubies (1.24cts). POA.



Ring in platinum set with one unheated oval spinel (3.02cts), a buffed cushion agatised dinosaur bone (13.63cts), spinels (0.83ct). POA.



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The new MESSIKA campaign starring Kendall Jenner & Alton Mason.

The least we can say is that Valérie Messika is loyal to her muses. Last year, the brand appointed a new icon, the uber famous model dubbed the “fashion icon of the decade” in 2017, Kendall Jenner. A year on and the collaboration is renewed. On this occasion, MESSIKA has partnered Jenner with a male model, the stylish Alton Mason. Although she impersonated an athletic siren dressed in a tight black neoprene bodysuit or a metallic acid blue crop top in last year’s campaign, she now strikes a different chord. ‘Caliente’ comes to mind as the shoot took place on some wild west road in America, a nod to the Paris-Texas movie. ‘Caliente’ also comes to mind with the styling. Jenner alternates a hot red latex sleeveless mini dress, a black latex bustier body and a purple latex sleeveless body. All three outfits hugging her tight, they are paired with stilettos, a direct evocation of Helmut Newton’s photography, in which women are seductively powerful, slightly dominatrix.

Mason also wears tight-fitted silhouettes (a black tank top and red leather trousers or a dark denim jacket paired with matching drawstring trousers), when he is not simply topless.

Red is associated with a Pontiac’s red glossy chassis, as Kendall Jenner and Alton Mason embark on a contemporary road trip that draws on life in America in the ‘60s. Featured in this story are D-Vibes pieces for Jenner, a twist on the traditional diamond rivière; whereas Mason wears Move pieces in titanium.

[www.messika.com](http://www.messika.com)

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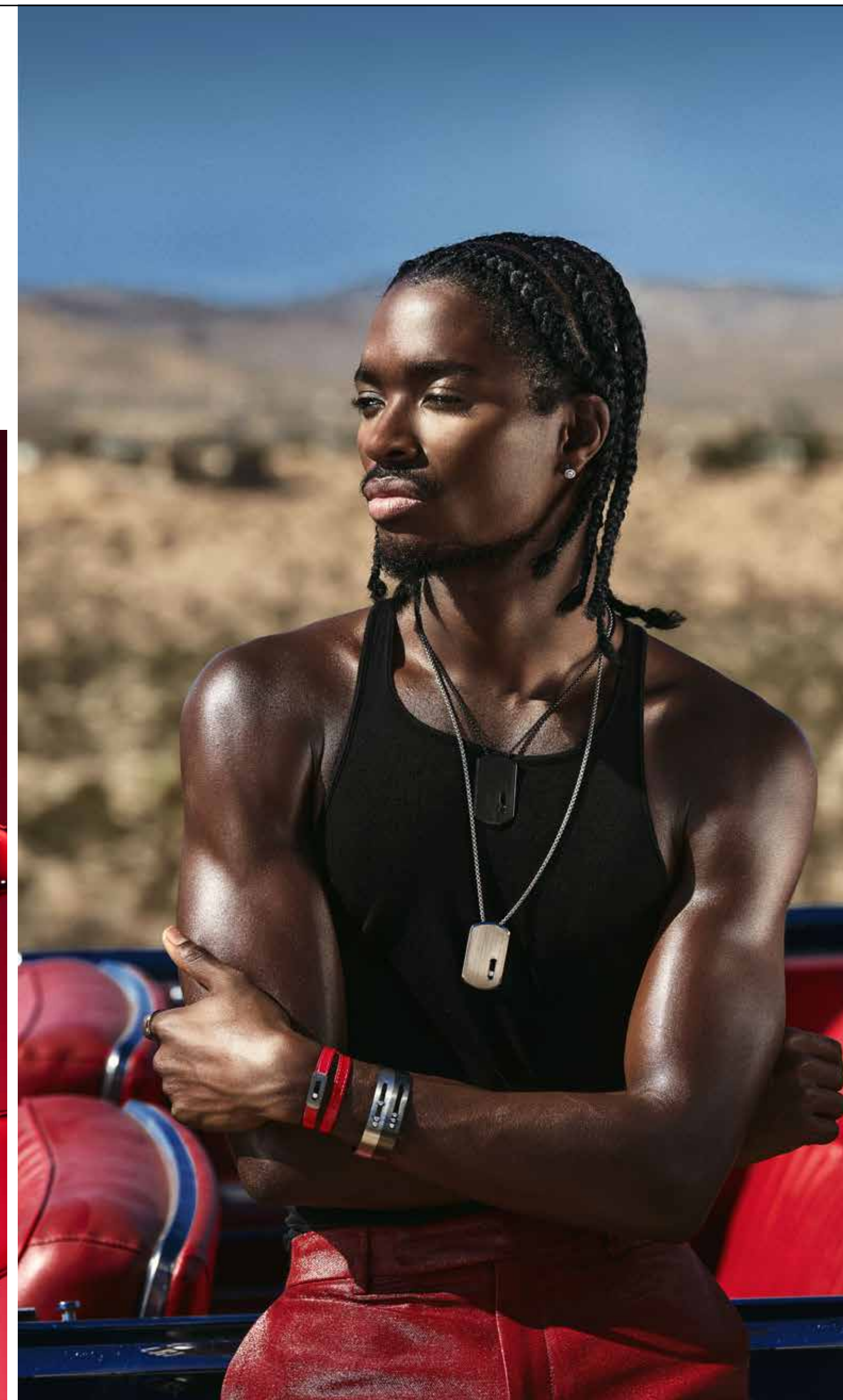
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The new MESSIKA campaign  
staring Kendall Jenner &  
Alton Mason.



Marvel superheroes have inspired the Blue and Black theme, for which iconic pieces have been re-imagined. Most notably, the Move bracelet is presented in a unisex way as Valérie Messika imagined a new variation by combining the iconic Move motif with a strong and bold chain.

Last but not least, Ultraviolet celebrates the world of science fiction with Kendall Jenner wearing pieces from the Move Iconica High Jewellery collection set with lapis lazuli. Both the design and the chosen stone point to ancient Egypt. Lapis lazuli was indeed considered a sacred stone by Egyptians (it was believed to lead the soul into immortality).

[www.messika.com](http://www.messika.com)

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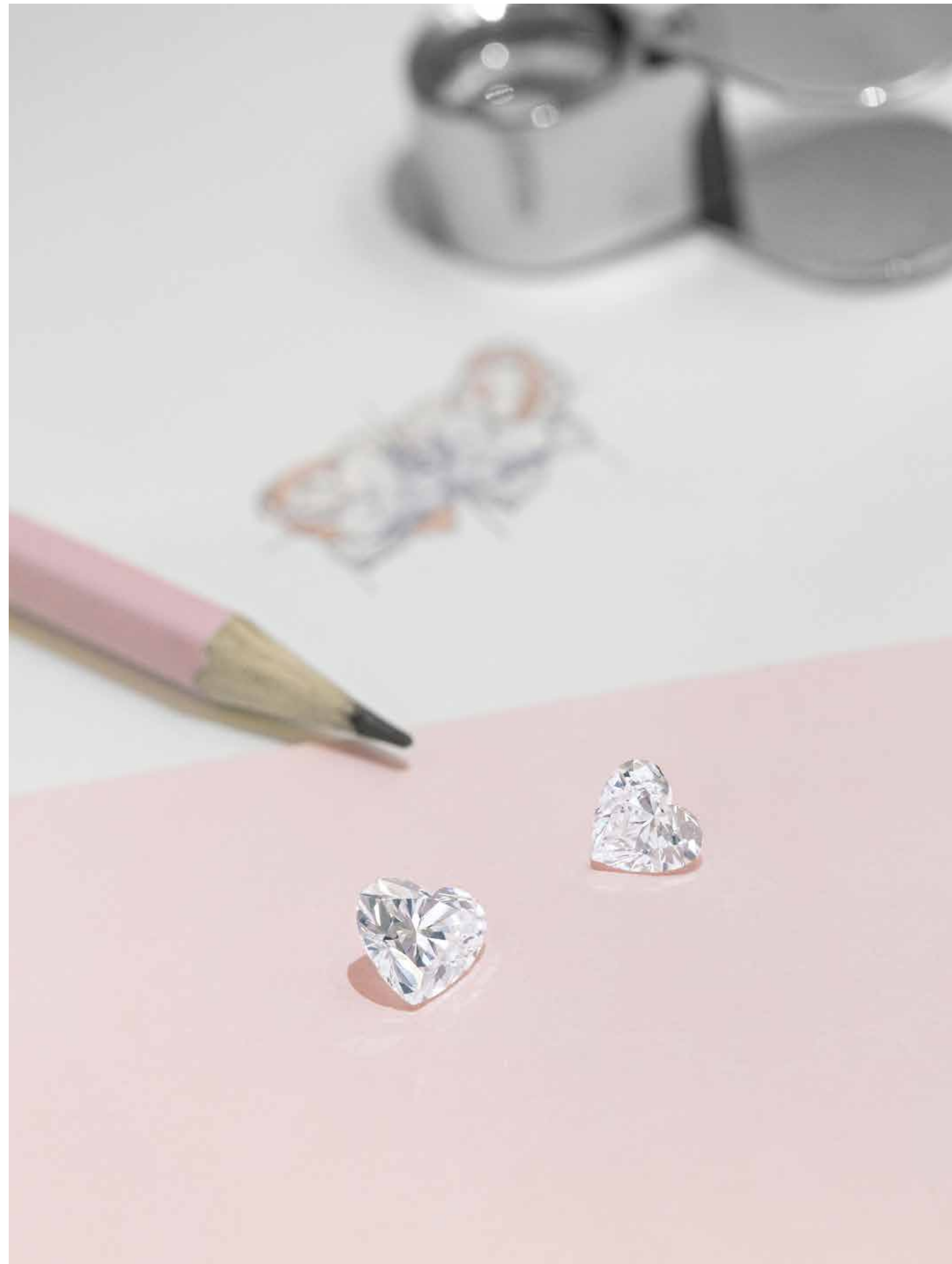
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One-of-a-kind Gemini Ring in platinum set with two heart-shaped white diamonds (respectively 3.20 and 2.15cts) from the Cullinan mine, diamonds and pink diamonds. POA.

The coronation of King Charles III is around the corner (May 6th) and a few luxury brands are gearing up to celebrate the occasion with special edition or one-of-a-kind creations. I have hand-picked three initiatives: First is the Gemini Ring by BOODLES which features two ‘historical’ heart-shaped diamonds from the Cullinan mine. The 3,106-carat Cullinan diamond yielded Cullinan I and Cullinan II – the ‘Greater and Lesser Stars of Africa’ – both of which are among the Crown Jewels. They featured during Her Majesty The Queen’s Coronation on 2 June 1953, in the Sovereign’s Sceptre and the Imperial State Crown. In a full circle move, the London jewellers have now designed a ring, whose 3.20ct and 2.15ct respectively main diamonds come from the same rough. Platinum, rose gold and of course, BOODLES’s signature pink diamonds complement this exceptional ring.

[www.boodles.com](http://www.boodles.com)


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One-of-a-kind Tiara by YOKO London in 18K white gold set with 19 Australian South Sea drop shaped pearls ranging from 8 to 15mm, and 24.97 carats of diamonds. POA.

<https://yokolondon.com>



Second is a spectacular tiara by YOKO London. Fit for a queen, the headpiece is made of nineteen perfectly matched Australian South Sea drop shaped pearls ranging from 8 to 15mm, which sway as the wearer moves. The magnificent pearls hang from a garland of heart-shaped bows, whereas the lower part evokes a crown. The structure features 24.97 carats of diamonds set in 18K white gold.

Third is a pair of shoes that could well end up on King Charles III feet. Courtesy of MANOLO BLAHNIK, part of four styles designed for the occasion, the Wilfo slip-on loafers are most recognisable by their all-over gold embroidery on black crepe. *"They are hand-stitched in bullion*

Wilfo Slip-on Loafers by MANOLO BLAHNIK in black crepe embroidered with bullion gold threads. POA.

[www.manoloblahnik.com](http://www.manoloblahnik.com)



*thread with each pair taking 25 hours to make", the team explains. Mr Blahnik further says "each style is a classic shape created using the most luxurious materials and in the most beautiful colours. From opulent gold embroidery, contrasting baguette crystal buckles and divine English silks, each style has a dazzling extravagance celebrating traditional English ceremony and reminiscent of the elaborate flocked interiors of historical palaces, which I truly adore."*

The four designs (Mario, Wilfo, Metz and Eaton) are available exclusively at the MANOLO BLAHNIK Men's Boutique in Burlington Arcade, London.

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And in conclusion, here is a short selection of the most desirable watches (in addition to the ones presented earlier in this article) that were just presented at the latest Watches & Wonder Geneva 2023 edition.



J12 Cybernetic Watch, 38mm by CHANEL; a graphic interpretation of a white pixel motif on a black-lacquer dial as well as on the unique case shaped like a staircase. POA.

[www.chanel.com](http://www.chanel.com)



MONTBLANC 1858 The Unveiled Secret Minerva Monopusher Chronograph Limited Edition of 88 pieces. POA.

[www.montblanc.com](http://www.montblanc.com)



TAG HEUER Carrera Plasma Diamant d'Avant Garde Chronograph Tourbillon, 44 mm. POA.

[www.tagheuer.com](http://www.tagheuer.com)



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Limelight Aura High Jewellery Watch by PIAGET; Piaget revisits the Aura high jewellery watch from 1989 by combining diamonds with sapphires. The baguette-cut stones are perfectly calibrated to fit the watch's form and integrated case and bracelet, as the blue sapphires are beautifully colour graduated – a design process that required more than eight months to source and select exactly the right stones. POA.

[www.piaget.com](http://www.piaget.com)


Les Cabinotiers Dual Moon Grand Complication Watch by VACHERON CONSTANTIN; this one-of-a-kind double sided watch houses a new manual-winding in-house Calibre. Calibre 2755 TMRCCQP has 11 horological complications including a minute repeater, a perpetual calendar, a precision moon phases and a sky chart, and 774 components. Les Cabinotiers Dual Moon Grand Complication watch represents one of watchmaking's most sophisticated grand complications in a single-piece edition in white gold. POA.

[www.vacheron-constantin.com](http://www.vacheron-constantin.com)


Slim d'Hermès Cheval de Légende Watch; created in 2015, the Slim d'Hermès watch is all about essentials; a simplicity composed of thoroughness and balance. These two new variations display a galloping horse, legendary of the Hermès brand, in a plethora of gold or blue enamel beads framed by a gem-set white gold case. POA.

[www.hermes.com](http://www.hermes.com)

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Limelight High Jewellery Cuff Watch by PIAGET; a new high jewellery cuff watch with ornamental stone dial using gold engraving techniques on the cuff. In rose gold with a white opal dial set with diamonds on an evocative bark and vein engraved finish. POA.

[www.piaget.com](http://www.piaget.com)


Dancing Hours Flying Tourbillon, GGC.1976. DS Watch named after the Orion Nebula NGC 1976 – one of our galaxy’s brightest nebulas and which is visible to the naked eye – the tourbillon sits front and centre on the dial, set with a diamond-studded star. A start-and-stop function on the crown activates a rotation of 12 mini stars, each one spinning on itself in 9 seconds and orbiting clockwise around the dial in 90 seconds. POA.

[www.gucci.com](http://www.gucci.com)


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IMPERIALE Day & Night Watch by CHOPARD; the emblematic floral motif appears against the backdrop of a sky whose ever-changing beauty evolves with the passing hours thanks to a rotating mechanism that distinguishes between day and night-time. Set with sapphires and diamonds and adorned with engraved gold lotus petals. POA.

[www.chopard.com](http://www.chopard.com)

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