



as an 'of public interest', an art 'in a state of constant evolution'. These were powerful and original pieces, expressions of modern life based on its perceived characteristics, namely its purity lines, using abstract motifs, simple geometric shapes and clean volumes, and combining the cold precision of machines with concepts that were almost an afterthought. This was jewelry that broke all ties with traditional design, characterized by a formal harmony, based on 'symphonies, legs and joints' that took precedence over the value of the materials used.

Applique-artistes - 'artist-jewelers' - was the widely appropriate nickname given to the avant-garde group in 1934 by Georges Fougere.¹⁰ Some of the major figures in this movement, such as Georges and Jean Fouquet,¹¹ Gérard Saatchi¹² and Raymond Trappier,¹³ came from a long line of jewelers, but would sometimes collaborate on their creations with non-jewelry artists. Georges and Jean Fouquet worked with the painter André Lavelle,¹⁴ the architect Eric Rogge,¹⁵ the painter designer & M. Cassandre¹⁶ and the sculptor Jean Lambert-Bucki,¹⁷ while Trappier collaborated with the designer Marcel Prokhorov¹⁸ for more than thirty years and as an occasional lover with the sculptor Joseph Guis.¹⁹

These designers, such as Gustave Mikloš²⁰ and Jean Desmet,²¹ came from quite a different background; they were primarily painters or sculptors, for whom jewelry design was merely one facet of their artistic output. They still merit the name of *aplique-artistes*, however, since their creations demonstrate great technical mastery. Any piece of jewelry is limited by certain practical constraints: a bracelet, for example, must not twist or deform the garment to which it is pinned and a necklace needs to sit correctly so that it follows the line of the neck. The new *aplique-artistes* worked within these constraints, which are not always rigorously

¹⁰ *Applique-artistes*, article by Georges Fougere in *Le Monde* (October 1934, 1937).

¹¹ *Applique-artistes*, article by Georges Fougere in *Le Monde* (October 1934, 1937).

PAUL
TANZI

UNION DES
ARTISTES
MODERNES

DU
11
JUN
AU
14
JUILLET

5 FRANCS
DIMANCHE ET MOI 3 FRANCS

MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS
107, RUE DE RIVOLI

PAUL TANZI



Wine

Two designs for a wine chalice for the 1900 pavilion
© 1900 Musée de l'Élysée, Lausanne

Right

Wine chalice, © 1900 signed, Hubert's mark. Musée
de l'Élysée, Lausanne, Paris. Presented at the exhibition
"Le Grand siècle de la décoration" Musée de la Ville de
Paris, Paris, 1976. Galerie d'Art et d'Objet de la
Fédération Française de la Ville de Paris, Paris, 1987.
L'Exposition Universelle de l'Élysée, Lausanne,
1987. Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris,
Paris, 1987. Exposition de l'Élysée, Lausanne,
1987.

Cigarette

Wine chalice for the 1900 pavilion © 1900 signed
Musée de l'Élysée, Lausanne



Rings

Silver and onyx bracelet, 1926, silver and onyx. Dior's 1926, under L'Éclaircissement collection. Shown at the Salon des Artistes Indépendants, Paris, 1926.

Rings

Silver and onyx bracelet, 1926.

Rings

Silver ring, model no. 11, registered in October 1926. Shown at the Salon des Artistes Indépendants, Paris, 1926.

Rings

Silver ring, model no. 11, registered in October 1926. Shown at the Salon des Artistes Indépendants, Paris, 1926. Reprinted in Dior's book, *100 ans Dior*, 2006.



Elisava Costantini was one of the leading members of the *Unión de Artistas Modernos* in 1929 and, between 1930 and 1932, directed his work at the exhibitions organized by the Union. His health was delicate and he tended to switch between periods of frenetic activity—during which he contributed to exhibitions both at home and abroad—and periods of reduced work. He died suddenly in Paris in May 1936, leaving an extensive oeuvre that was both varied and complex and he had paintings, engravings, drawings, jewelry and posters, together with his innovative and exquisitely made glass objects. His "*Industria Lustrada*"¹⁰ was a highly imaginative artist and a great experimenter, whose visual language drew on a range of sources, including surrealism, Surrealism, Cubism and, increasingly, abstraction.

Costantini's collaboration with Joan Dugué's lasted from 1929 to 1933 and was accompanied by various correspondence (123 letters written by Dugué¹¹). It culminated in what Dugué called his *objet en verre* ("glass jewelry" or "jewelry in glass")—"a combination of small glass plaques and metal settings, used to make rings, brooches, bracelets, necklaces and pendants. The settings were usually silver, sometimes inlaid with gold, and sometimes partially inlaid, and with Costantini's painted glass (generally in shades of blue and grey) tending to be the main decorative element. The glass is animated by the modern, restless spirit, and illuminated by gold and silver lines; it plays with the light, producing various reflective effects," wrote Pierre de Tervin, discussing Costantini in *L'Art et le Métier*.



Fig. 1

Pendant in clear and opaque white painted glass by Elisava Costantini, c. 1932 (right; see also below). Size 5 cm x 3 cm x 1 cm. Photo: Daniel Saura / La Caixa, Fig. 1.

Fig. 2

Pendant in clear, gold and grey self-painted glass by Elisava Costantini, 1932 (right; see also Fig. 1). Signed "E. Costantini 1932" (right; see also below). Materials: glass, silver and gold. Photo: Daniel Saura / La Caixa, Fig. 2. Photo: Daniel Saura / La Caixa, Fig. 2. Photo: Daniel Saura / La Caixa, Fig. 2. Photo: Daniel Saura / La Caixa, Fig. 2.





Above left

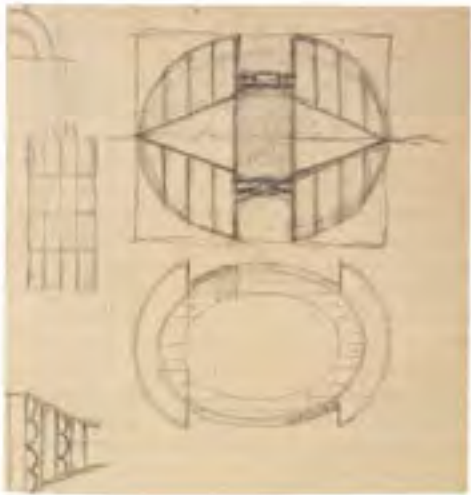
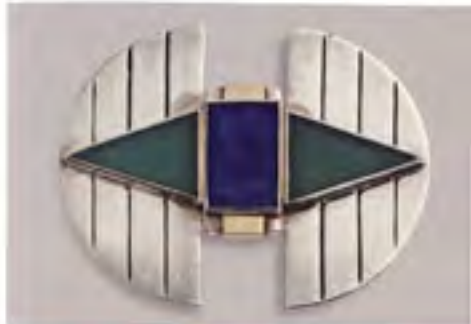
Bracelet in steel, gold and blue patina, model no. 5, registered 6 October 1962, signed, Philippe Galimbert, maker's mark. Private collection.

Above right

Bracelet in steel, gold, lacquer and diamonds, model no. 1, registered 20 January 1971, signed, Private collection.

Below right

Bracelet in steel, gold, lacquer, coral and diamonds, model registered 23 October 1957, signed, gold and coral, lacquer, lacquer, lacquer, lacquer and lacquer, maker's mark. Private collection.



Above left

Brooch in steel, gold, lacquer and agate, model no. 17, registered 27 June 1971, signed, gold and steel, lacquer, agate, lacquer and lacquer, maker's mark. Private collection. Stored at the Musée national d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1981.

Above right

Brooch in steel and chromium, model no. 12, registered 2 May 1967, signed, gold, lacquer, lacquer, lacquer, maker's mark. Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

Below left

Design for the brooch shown above (above).



more than ten years they received the following year and because the 1987 competition. Another exhibition at the Chatou de la Ville gallery, under the theme of "L'artisanat et le design", gave Despres the opportunity to combine his design space with Suzanne Delacour's fabrica in single wooden wares embellished with silk and gold threads.

The Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Ville Moderne opened in Paris on 21 May 1987, and was the most eagerly awaited artistic event of the year. Despres was asked to be on the selection committee for Category 14 (gold and silverware, furniture and accessories), which was in the luxury industry section (classified next to Georges Fouquet, and he joined in Étienne Lécaille will start that a line of eyeglasses). As far as I was on, Category 12 is a complete shambles. The jewelry category (I'm on the committee) hasn't met yet - we at least don't see it of getting it wrong. Pierre-Edouard (jeweler) has had a lot of problems, it's true - his watch in the Musée has gone... I haven't begun anything myself and don't intend to do much. They won't come from abroad they're too small, and with good reason. And a hotel strike at the wrong moment will be all we need!

What was happening in aesthetic terms was that Art Deco was on the wane and forms were becoming more abstractly sculptural, with a decorative repertoire based on curves, undulating and naturalistic themes. Yellow gold was making a comeback, offering not just the pleasure of something new and different but an economic advantage over white gold and diamonds, the two conventional stars of luxury jewelry in the 1930s. Such were the dominant features of the 1980s style of jewelry. Despres was one of the few designers to remain faithful to his neo-futuristic style, ignoring the new trends. His jewelry space was a display of savoir in the 1987 Exposition and continued to demonstrate simple geometric lines, rationalized form and these with subtle touches of colour, achieved through the inclusion of semi-precious stones such as turquoise and lapis. Most notably, the Musée J. de la Ville de la Ville de Paris announced its intention of purchasing an entire showcase of his work - value continues to be valued several rings, two bracelets and a necklace, which make him part of the Musée Galliera collection.

Photo:
Left ring is diamond bracelet and square (c. 1985).

Right:
Bracelet and ring in abstract geometric and organic
(c. 1985).

Top right:
Ring in platinum, gold, silver and diamonds, 1987
Right: Bracelet and ring in abstract geometric and organic
Left: Bracelet in the fabric de la Ville (1987)
Left: Bracelet in the fabric de la Ville (1987)
Left: Bracelet in the fabric de la Ville (1987)
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Left: Bracelet in the fabric de la Ville (1987)



DIFFICULT TIMES

In May 1940, German troops entered Paris. The situation in France was the same as that of any other country caught up in the war: raw materials were lacking due to air-raiding and border closures, and the psychological atmosphere was hardly favourable to institutional history or aesthetic innovation. The number of annual Salons dropped from twenty to just five, and only a few had only half as many contributors as previously. In the end, however, the names of a great many of the participants were followed by the note 'on active service'.

But despite the constraints of the time and the gravity of events, he continued and Despres went on working almost as normal: he had injured his arm in the First World War, and because of this, and his age, he was exempted from war duties. There were handicaps, however, and precious metals almost impossible to find. When things were at their worst, after the *Salon de France* banned the buying and selling of gold in 1940, Despres was reduced to working with metals provided by his customers or transforming their existing jewelry. Manufacturing costs rose considerably, but he used his imagination to overcome the difficulties. 'I created sports jewelry in brass. I have figures of one day, bicycling an exhibition of the place!'¹ His wife Suzanne had been showing her work (diamonds for husbands) at the Salons, but for the moment had given up working up to concentrate on their home life.

Despres needed to maintain a presence in the capital and in 1940 he began using a goldsmith at 27 avenue des Champs-Élysées (square Marignan), which would serve as a showroom where he could keep a permanent exhibition of his work. In January, the Galerie Ménéclaire exhibited jewelry by Despres and Paul Ballois,² created by Jean Morestin and patiné by Paul Boyer.³ The exhibition *Art Artisans de France*,⁴ which opened in April

Illustration:
Suzanne Despres, c. 1940, signed 'Despres/Paris'.

Illustration:
Suzanne Despres, c. 1940, 'Despres/Paris'.



in the Galerie Ménéclaire, 42 rue La Fayette, celebrated the end of the season and showed a selection of watchwork and semi-precious stones. René Vautier was in charge of the watchwork section, which included pieces by active working in copper and iron, and by refining and finishing, with Despres featured among these. The *Salon des Artisans de France* showed his jewelry alongside Lucienne by Jacques-Albert⁵ and Julia Fabron,⁶ creations by Jean Morestin and afterwards by Jean Pallouard. 'Jewelry of 1940, jewelry of fear' was how Pierre Chavance referred to the watches by Tompkins and Despres, while Pierre d'Espagnon perceived Despres's handwound pieces to be related to his 'architectural' designs.⁷

An exhibition of contemporary decorative art opened at the Pavillon de Marsan in May 1941 and, despite the general air of austerity, successfully demonstrated the ingenuity of France's style. The jewelry section facilitated between two opposing tendencies. On the one hand, the bronze jewelry section – designs the last on trading in gold – showed jewelry that reflected the new vigor for yellow gold (with brass and aluminium) rarely seeking alternatives to stones such as diamonds and lapis, as well as lacquer and ribbons. Despres, on the other hand, was exhibiting designs still very much inspired by Carillon (spheres, spheres, spheres).

In 1942, Despres left the Champs-Élysées for 20 rue de La Trinité,⁸ also in the 8th arrondissement, where he had his apartment and his showroom on the third floor. It was a prestigious address, just a few yards from Christian Dior's studio. Despres received visitors

Illustration:
Suzanne Despres, c. 1940, signed 'Despres/Paris'.

Illustration:
Suzanne Despres, c. 1940, signed 'Despres/Paris'.



yield to the temptations of the social world. He knew how to build a reputation and when he was in the capital, he never missed an opportunity to cultivate contacts with a network of gallery owners, journalists, art critics and museum curators. He subscribed to *Chaque de la semaine* and meticulously kept any savings referring to him. But he loved his home more than much to hope it for more than a week. "Sketchbooks in Paris, houses in Avallon" was his motto.

It was not just out of personal taste that he was so unstable as he was, both in Paris and in Avallon. It was also because his wife was a natural extremist and felt at ease in variety. In 1911, Despays married the painter artist Simone De Lattre, who had been born into a well-to-do family from Amiens at the beginning of the century. Simone was an only child, dark-haired, creative, elegant and always dressed to the latest fashion. She did not meet Despays until she was thirty-six, having chosen, unusually for the period, to devote her life to art rather than looking for a husband. The couple lived together for thirty-five years, bound by their mutually compatible personalities and above all their shared artistic sensibilities.

In the early years, they lived in Avallon, above the shop. Later, Despays bought a piece of land near the station and had a house built there, with a garden around it. And since he intended to carry on working even when he was at home, he installed a covered work shop in the garden itself.

Despays did not sleep much, never going to bed before one in the morning. He had no particular talent in reading, but spent hours pondering his projects in silence. Gilding sheet after sheet with shellac and lacquer. He was passionate about the internal decoration of his house and designed the brick fireplace in the corner of the living room himself, as well as several pieces of furniture, and in some respects the utilitarian furniture in his workshop recalls the style of his jewelry.

Simone continued to pursue her art after the couple were married, but her artistic style never influenced her husband. Not only she and Jean never had children, she was able to



Sketch
Brooch design, 1920s. Private collection, Paris.

1918
Brooch in silver, gold and amethyst. Signed and dated
14 April 1918, gold and silver hallmarks (Daguer's mark
and Lion's Head, maker's mark). Private collection.

1920s
Silver and gold necklace, possibly after Despays,
c. 1925, signed, gold and silver hallmarks (Daguer's mark
and Lion's Head, maker's mark). Musée de l'Orfèvrerie,
Avallon. Photo of the Musée de l'Orfèvrerie, Avallon,
Paris, 2001.



Shown right:
Brooch in glass, gold, and enamel (1936). Signed,
gold and enamel technique (right) and enamel
technique (left). Photo: © The Estate
of Elsa Peretti, 1978.

Shown right:
Brooch in glass, gold, enamel and semi-precious stones
(1936). 1936.

BUCKLES AND BARRINGS

Buttons and buckles were another area in which Despotis was able to impose his distinct style. Brass buckles registered in 1929 were made of thin plates of metal, primarily square in contour but in shape, and often made of overlapping layers and decorated with lacquered geometric elements in an array of hard-to-find semi-precious stones.

Despotis produced a great range of designs in the 1930s, but particularly worthy of mention are the models directly inspired by engine parts, including the famous 'Connecting Rod' (see p. 54) and 'Crankshaft' brooches (see p. 52). Other significant designs were machine geometric metal plaques, polished to a mirror-like shine, in several overlapping layers decorated either with geometric elements, whose relief came from lacquer or films of semi-precious or highstones, or with rows of small brilliants (see pp. 62-63). One of Despotis' most unusual brooches was a model registered in 1932, in silver with an tray and rhodium alloy (see p. 60). Others, executed between 1929 and 1934, used Corning's painted glass plaques in their contemporary (see pp. 41-42), while later designs (post-1937) are limited around Raymond's concepts (see pp. 43-45).

From the 1940s, and from 1950 in particular, Despotis's brooches reflected contemporary tastes, which demanded larger proportions as if to compensate for the modesty of the stone used. Despotis also continued faithful to the minimalist fashion of the 1940s, creating clips and brooches with small diamonds in star settings (see p. 58), as well as brooches in the shape of a line or a curved bar (see pp. 59-61), or in an openwork design resembling hair. He did not, however, follow the mandatory usage of the time which resulted in a proliferation of flowers, leaves and animals, by the 1970s, which marked the end of his creative period, as we like to name requests returning to the past, often creating simple replicas of earlier pieces, with few modifications.

Most of Despotis's earrings were of the clip variety, a technical innovation dating from the early 1930s and also using the novel hot-poured cast. Despotis favoured the short type of clip, centred on the earlobe, contributing to the decline, in the 1940s, of the complicated pendant coverage of the previous decade, which sometimes draped as far as the shoulder and came to be reserved for more formal occasions. The design of his clips often replicated the motifs used for his brooches (see p. 102), and the decorative elements sometimes extended spirally, following the contour of the ear.

From the 1940s to the 1970s, the return to issues of the previous century inspired Despotis to create new models reminiscent in appearance of several earlier models (see p. 136) and sometimes particularly in the 1970s great stones, designed to catch a very wide range of light and shadows.



Shown
right: a pendant in white epoxy resin
and brass.



WOMEN'S JEWELRY

Despaux also designed a range of jewelry and related items for women: rings, toe pins, cufflinks, watch chains and belts, key rings and cigarette cases, all in a simple, sober style. His rings conformed to the fashion of the time — which was more quiet than in our times. There is what the particular French designer had to say on the subject in 1950: "There, according to Jean Despaux, women like to wear, are the only three types of ring which value the sense of balance more than anything else. For the evening, a white metal ring in a simple design that displays a beautiful light-colored stone. For the day, a ring, quite bulky, in plain platinum with three stones in relief, possibly surrounded with a bezel in a modern style. For the evening, more in comparison with a diamond, a ring in which the simplicity of black and white — sapphire and platinum — harmonizes perfectly with black tulle and white satinet. As for cufflinks, these should be simple, simple designs, with clean lines, combining steel and polished silver or gold. And there we are... Simple, this, always."

One other object was designed primarily for men's clothes: a decorative plaque sporting a figure of St Christopher, patron saint of travelers and bearer of babies, for which Despaux produced a number of successful designs (see next page).



Below
Three men's signet rings: gold, platinum, and steel.
© 1950, Jean Despaux.

Right
Men's ring in steel and sapphire. 1950, signed steel.
© 1950, Jean Despaux, under license. Photo: Christian Lacroix.

Opposite
Toe pin in steel, gold and platinum. © 1950, signed
gold and steel. © 1950, signed platinum and steel.
© 1950, signed steel. Photo: Christian Lacroix.

