

JEWELLERY COLLECTABLES

Buying power

Landmark Cartier pieces are up for sale in Australia, writes **Glynis Traill-Nash**.



If you've been to the Cartier exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, you will have seen the dazzling jewellery worn by royalty and celebrities from Princess Margaret to Rihanna over more than a century.

It might even have made you wish that you, too, could own a piece of jewellery history. Which begs the question: What if you could?

In response to the buzz around the storied French jeweller, auction house Leonard Joel is holding a selling exhibition in Sydney and Melbourne of Cartier pieces spanning more than 100 years. "It's the first time in Australia there's been a selling exhibition of this scale, particularly for one company," says Lauren Boustridge, Sydney head of fine jewels and timepieces at Leonard Joel.

The 45 pieces in the Leonard Joel exhibition range from a Belle Époque

Left: A model wears some of the vintage Cartier jewellery being sold by Leonard Joel auction house. Below: The Tutti Frutti bird brooch.

PHOTOS: OSCAR COLMAN



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Need to know

Cartier: A Selling Exhibition is open to the public this weekend (August 29-30) in Sydney at Leonard Joel Woollahra, and next weekend (September 5-6) at its Melbourne headquarters.

pearl, emerald and diamond necklace to a Panthère ring from the 2000s, via art deco and mid-century jewellery. They have been sourced from collectors and dealers around the world in recent years, with the Australian customer firmly in mind, says Boustridge.

"We looked at tiaras for \$2.5 million, but are they right for the audience?" says Boustridge. "We selected things we thought were interesting, fun, relevant – pieces we don't often see in the secondary market in Australia. We wanted those older, more unique pieces that are still wearable."

Many of Cartier's signature styles are represented in the exhibition, notably its whimsical animal designs. There's a bird and two turtle brooches, a crocodile ring and a number of Panthère pieces featuring the house's iconic big cat.

"One of my favourites is the lovebirds brooch, with two birds sitting together with little turquoise bellies and green emerald eyes. They're beautiful, sweet, playful," says Boustridge.

Another standout is a colourful set of earrings and cocktail ring from the 1950s featuring bold amethysts, turquoise and diamonds. It is from around the same period as the famous amethyst, turquoise and diamond bib necklace commissioned in 1947 by the Duke of Windsor as a gift for the Duchess of Windsor, one of the centrepieces of the NGV exhibition.

Leonard Joel chose to hold a selling exhibition rather than an auction largely for demographic reasons, says Boustridge. While auctions can be a little mystifying, most people are familiar with art exhibitions and retail environments.

"They can come in, something has a price, and they can buy it."

Those prices range from the low \$20,000s to more than \$300,000 for a mid-century bird brooch featuring rubies, sapphires and emeralds carved in Cartier's Tutti Frutti style. The total value of the jewellery is around \$3.5 million.

For Boustridge, Cartier's continued appeal is multi-layered. "It has been able stay relevant through exceptional craftsmanship, storytelling and the use of exceptional stones, and that royal and celebrity provenance." **L&L**