

Color & More at La Biennale Paris

The month of September 2017 marked the new annual positioning and new name of the former Biennale des Antiquaires, now called La Biennale Paris. This year, high-end Parisian jewelers were notably absent and, like previous editions, the September event seemed much less flamboyant, at least in the jewelry sector.

Marie Chabrol reports...



Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Abdullah Al Thani, whose remarkable collection of jewels illuminated the Grand Palais a few months ago, La Biennale Paris was highly anticipated by both art dealers and collectors.

Yet, many people wondered whether changing it to an annual event was the right decision. The art dealers seemed to think it was. The booths were superb and the selections were particularly refined, with rarely seen pieces—among them a 17th-century ivory of Mary Magdalene, selections of pre-Islamic art and Art Nouveau ceramics by Adrien Dalpayrat.

The Barbier-Mueller collection transformed the Grand Palais into a wonderful, if ephemeral, museum. Unfortunately, however, the continually rising admission prices—peaking at €38—prevented a larger public dissemination of the artistic and cultural wonders proposed during the ten-day event. Having said that, the number of visitors was up this year, with more than 32,000 entries, most of them paid admissions.

Five jewelers exhibited at La Biennale this year: Anna Hu, Moussaieff and Glenn Spiro for the first time and Nirav Modi and Boghossian for the second time.



1 - *Magpie* brooch featuring South Sea pearl, pink and blue sapphires, green tourmalines, moonstones and diamonds by Anna Hu. (Photo: Anna Hu)

2 - *Athena Siren Aria* brooch with a 102.15-ct tanzanite, colored sapphires, green tourmalines, moonstones, peridots, emeralds and diamonds by Anna Hu. (Photo: Anna Hu)

3 - *Siren Aria* ring featuring an 22.82 emerald, moonstones, diamonds, sapphires, garnets, tourmalines and emeralds by Anna Hu. (Photo: Anna Hu)



4 - Diamond and gold ring set with a 98-ct Colombian emerald by G. (Photo: Glenn Spiro)

5 - Old mine 100-ct Colombian emerald and old-cut diamond earrings by G. (Photo: Glenn Spiro)

6 - Pear-shaped diamond and sapphire *Kissing* necklace by Boghossian. (Photo: Boghossian family)

7 - Ring featuring oval-shaped emerald center, and inlaid with green opal and chrysoprase by Boghossian. (Photo: Boghossian)

8 - White gold *Waterfall* earrings with diamonds and Colombian emeralds by Nirav Modi. (Photo: Nirav Modi)

9 - Spinel, diamond and mother-of-pearl ring in gold by Boghossian. (Photo: Boghossian family)

10 - *Fishbone* earrings in titanium and white gold, with 24 spessartite garnets, 826 brilliant-cut orange sapphires and 158 brilliant-cut diamonds, for 43.27 total carats of gemstones, by G. (Photo: Glenn Spiro)

11 - *Bloom* white gold ring with diamonds and two no-oil 1-ct Pansjhir emeralds by Nirav Modi. (Photo: Nirav Modi)

12 - *Butterfly* gold and titanium ring featuring diamonds and rubies by G. (Photo: Glenn Spiro)

13 - Bow brooch, circa 1860-1890, made of turquoise, natural saltwater pearls, gold and silver. (Photo: Boghossian family)



We originally saw Anna Hu house two years ago during Fashion Week, when she presented her collections in Paris. The designer is now recognized for her richly set pieces using hundreds, if not thousands, of gemstones. Most of these jewels are made in Paris, although the bold colors are more typical of fine Asian jewelry, with motifs evoking Chinese culture, such as dragons, cranes, cloudy landscapes, etc. The back of her jewelry was also visible, revealing the complexity of manufacturing. The beautiful stones included 100 carats of tanzanite and more than 22 carats of Colombian emeralds.

Boghossian and Nirav Modi returned for the second consecutive year, confirming that this event is beneficial for them, and offers them the opportunity to be present on French territory. The Indian jeweler, Nirav Modi, plans several store openings in 2018/2019 and a Parisian location has not been excluded.

Boghossian added to its existing collections of *Inlays* and *Kissing* rings, where the stones are always selected with great care. In particular, was a ring featuring a 2.15-carat blue spinel from Vietnam. The brand also showcased its private collection, which includes period pieces signed by Cartier, Fabergé and Lalique, among others.

The period pieces in the Boghossian collection also connected with the brand's cultural project to purchase and restore the Villa Empain in Brussels, where it has since installed its foundation and now hosts exhibitions, artistic performances, concerts and sports activities. The family is deeply invested in cultural patronage and supports numerous projects in Belgium, Lebanon and Armenia.



14 - Gold necklace featuring a 144.51-ct Colombian cabochon drop emerald, a 180.86-ct Sri Lankan cabochon sapphire, diamonds (124.60 ctw) and a 22.20-ct natural pearl by Moussaieff. (Photo: Moussaieff)

15 - Art Nouveau tiara, signed René Lalique, circa 1905-1910, featuring pate de verre, enamel, moonstone, pearls, and horn. (Photo: Boghossian family)

16 - *Traffic Light* necklace featuring a 43.86-ct Colombian emerald, a 158.81-ct Sri Lanka sapphire and 4.02-ct and 5.16-ct Thai rubies by Moussaieff. (Photo: Moussaieff)

17 - Art Deco evening bag, signed Boucheron, circa 1930, with natural pearls, carved rock crystal handle, diamonds and gold. (Photo: Boghossian family)

18 - *Winter Plum* cuff featuring rubies, onyx and diamonds by Anna Hu. (Photo: Anna Hu)



19 - A magnificent Mogok ruby necklace. The complete set (with bracelet and earrings) features 27 natural untreated rubies (71.11 ctw) by Nirav Modi. (Photo: Nirav Modi)

20 - Gold ring featuring 4.34-ct Fancy Vivid Blue diamond and a 6.45-ct Intense Fancy Pink diamond by Moussaieff. (Photo: Moussaieff)

21 - Marquise-shaped aquamarine with an inlaid diamond and diamond accents in gold by Boghossian. (Photo: Boghossian family)

The presence of the Boghossian private collection of vintage jewels was also noteworthy since antique jewelry has declined in favor of other artistic mediums at La Biennale. The American dealer, Siegelson, did not return in 2016, and the absence this year of the French company, Martin du Daffoy, was noticed. While vintage-jewelry specialists offered beautiful pieces, few remarkable new items were seen. Among the standouts, however, was a 19th-century English gold and silver necklace set with more than 300 carats of natural and untreated colored sapphires from Sri Lanka that was displayed by Véronique Bamps.

Nirav Modi showcased a number of interesting pieces, including an important Mogok ruby suite with white gold, diamonds and 27 Burmese rubies, which took five years to assemble. Among its other notable pieces was a diamond and gold set featuring no-oil Panshir emeralds, namely the *Bloom* ring that is perfectly illuminated by two one-carat stones for a dazzling effect. The jeweler is known today primarily for its diamond pieces with special sizes as well as for atypical center stones, such as kornepurine that was presented in July 2017.

The London brands Moussaieff and Glenn Spiro made their Parisian debut under the name of the Grand Palais. Moussaieff seemed to prefer the four major precious gems, such as natural unheated sapphires of almost 100 carats, emeralds and rubies of several tens of carats and luminous colored diamonds. Ms. Alisa Moussaieff and her daughter, Tamara, shared their vision of the jewelry, which is to create iconic pieces, sometimes imposing, that reflect their passion for remarkable stones. The women also appreciate "the quality of finishing provided by their own Parisian workshops."

Glenn Spiro's creations, under the "G" brand are very modern and joyful, like Spiro and his son, Joseph. Many jewels contain mechanisms to animate them, and the brand is famous for its *Butterfly* ring whose wings move when the fingers bend. Also spectacular was a ring with a cabochon-cut Colombian emerald of nearly 100 carats. Their unusual *Fishbone* earrings delightfully mixed orange sapphires, diamonds and spessartite garnets while another ring judiciously combined amber and rubies.

The expectations are great for the 2018 edition, and hopefully more period jewels will be shown. Although next year's participants have not been announced, a return of Parisian high-end jewelry brands is being whispered.

Plus, the French Syndicat National des Antiquaires (SNA), the antique jewelry trade association, has opened negotiations to attract previous exhibitors in the antique jewelry sector. Whatever the case, this exclusive fair will remain one of the most beautiful in the world. 