

Great Names in Costume Jewellery

Though a lot of the costume jewelry available on the market is not signed, the most desirable pieces of vintage costume jewelry bear a maker's name. This makes it easier to identify even though, with the prices some of those pieces are getting nowadays, some reproductions have started making their way onto the scene.

Here is a brief alphabetical overview of the best makers and designers of the period, with a few key facts about their production:

Marcel Boucher (1930-1970)

Mainly brooches with birds, insects or flowers. Excellent workmanship, beautiful designs.

Hattie Carnegie (1920-1980)

Especially known for her pieces with a strong oriental influence and her mixture of enamelling with rhinestones, pearls and other materials.

Coro (since 1901)

Still operating in Canada this company had one of the longest and most productive histories in costume jewelry. Most popular for its duettes, rhinestone sets and trembler brooches.

Eisenberg (since 1930s)

Recognizable for its great quality and usage of Swarovski crystals in superb settings. Fun and over-the-top.

Miriam Haskell (since 1920s)

Stunning designs using a lot of seed and baroque pearls as well as Bohemian glass, often with foil-backed large rhinestones. Easily recognizable for its bold design.

Har (1950s-60s)

Usually signed, original designs, most known for Its "Chinamen" sets imitating ivory with gold plating and rhinestones.

Hobé (since 1880s)

Often inspired by Byzantine motifs and relying on Victorian imagery, combined with the use of Rhinestones in a wide variety of colours.

Hollycraft (1940-1970) One of the only makers who dated its pieces, Hollycraft used a lot of gold plating combined with pastel coloured rhinestones.



Monet Bracelets

Monet (since 1937)

Using a lot of gold and silver plated settings and still one of the most productive makers today. Most pieces are signed. Produced some items for Yves Saint-Laurent in the 1980s.

Sherman (1947-1981)

The most well-known Canadian maker of costume Jewelry, the items it produced are among the most sought-after in Canada today. Using the best Swarovski crystals in a vast array of colours and pronged settings for more solidity. Most pieces are signed. Lots of large sets including brooches, necklaces, earrings and bracelets. An expert identified over one thousand different colour combinations in its production line. Large brooches and a wonderful fluidity of line in all pieces.



Sherman Brooch

Trifari (1918-today)

One of the most productive of costume jewelry makers still around today. Its most collected vintage pieces are the "jelly bellies" stones produced before WWII, as well as the figural pieces (people, animals, birds, etc.) and floral items of the same period.

Whiting & Davis (1876-today) Most known for its handbags, Whiting & Davis has also produced a long line of costume jewelry in Victorian, art nouveau and art deco styles, since they were around at that time. Their most desirable items are their snake-shaped bracelets.

There are quite a few good books on collecting costume jewelry but a quick and easy way to find reliable information is by visiting reliable web sites. Some of those, made by people who have a genuine love of the items are very complete and informative. The best I've been able to find is at <http://www.illusionjewels.com> - it contains information on the best makers with photos of their signature plates throughout the years, an informative section on the history of costume jewelry and, of course, it offers costume jewelry for sale.

Whether you look for costume jewelry to wear or to collect, it is an area of collecting that will give you years of enjoyment.

Are you interested in collecting costume jewellery? Send us an e-mail and let us know. We'll try and keep an eye out for you. In the meantime, you can **search for costume jewellery** in all of our current auction items.

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