

Right: A cartouche bearing Sotirio Bulgari's initials was registered as Bvlgari's mark for silver at the Goldsmiths Hall, London, in 1967. It appears on all Bvlgari silver produced in England alongside three other marks: the Lion Passant (a striding lion), the symbol for sterling silver ("925"); the leopard mask, the symbol for the London Assay Office; and the date letter (the letter "O" indicates 1988). Bvlgari Historical Archives

ON TITOLO

The ties between who we are and the titles we carry.
A gesture denoting quality and worth.



Ever since language was discovered, humans have felt compelled to baptize things that elicit emotion with a handful of syllables. This is the power of a name; the greatest title we attribute to the world around us.

"Names are the consequences of things", wrote Dante Alighieri, or rather, words echo reality in order to reflect the spectacle of life, of which they are the essence and aroma.

The opposite is also true: without words, nothing exists. A book without a title disappears. Gone is Ulysses when he orders the Cyclops to call him *Nobody*.

While names are the titles we give to the world—the sweet, juicy taste called apple or the strange shapes that chase each other across the sky called *clouds*—the etymology of the word *title* comes from the Latin *titulus*, which denoted the inscription placed on statues or triumphal arches to specify who or what they represented.

Today, the word most frequently refers to the name or phrase designating a book, a song, a work of art, a movie, or an article. Though there are many other possible uses, such as a "legal title" or "noble title", "title deeds" and "title insurance."

In Italian, even metals have a *titolo*. The term comes from a practice dating back to Medieval numismatics and indicates the percentage of pure metal (gold, silver, platinum, etc.) in an alloy.

The *titolo* of precious metals is an indicator of their quality and value, influencing their ability to withstand air, water, and time, as well as the luster with which a piece of jewelry illuminates its wearer.

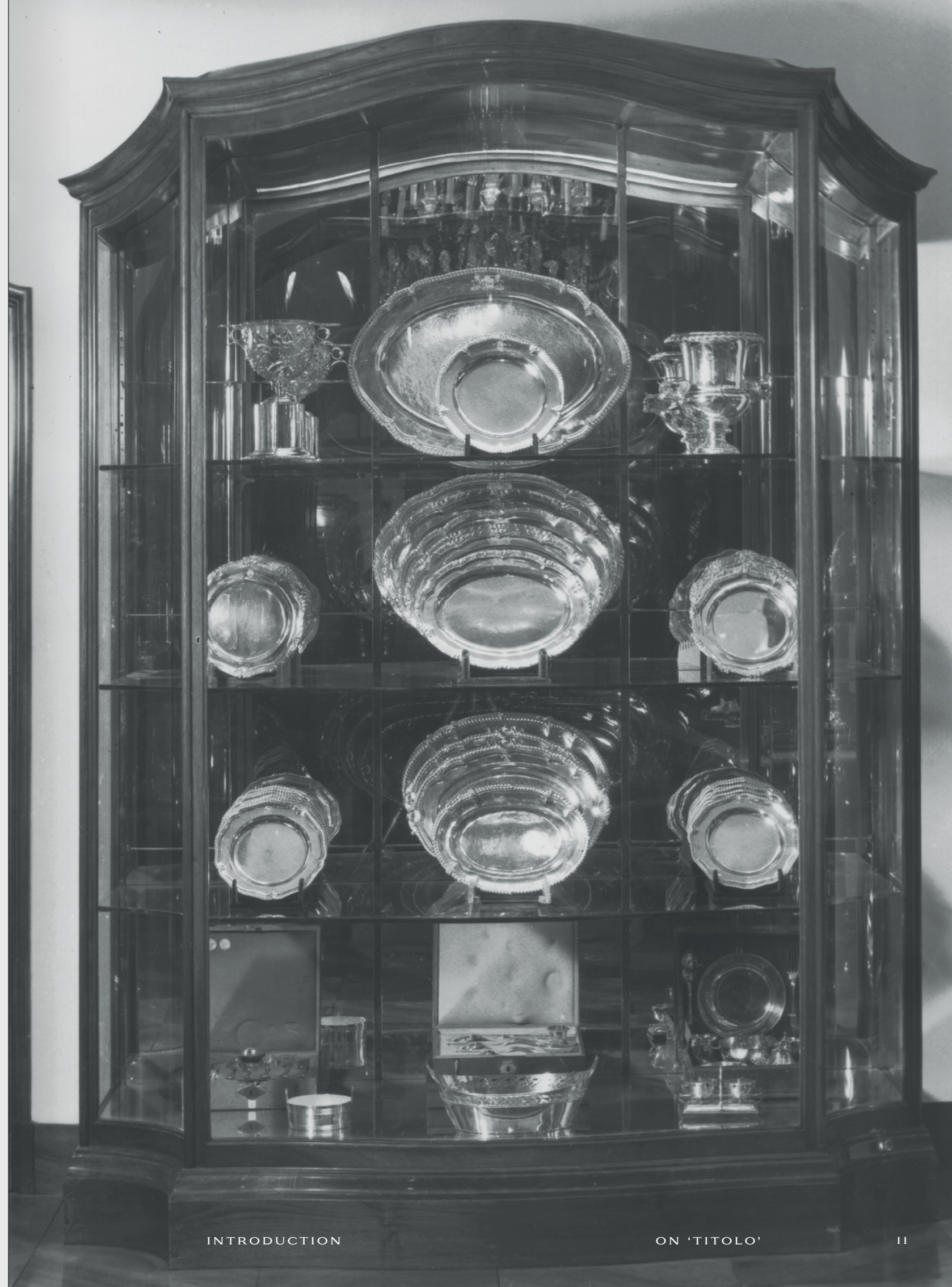
The concept of a title owes its existence to another invention shaped by the sinuous fibers of papyrus: the book.

When literature began to accompany the nights of men and women with its canto, poets felt the need to give their works a title, so their name could travel swiftly across oceans, dreams, and generations.

The origin of this adventure lies in Egypt, on the riverbanks of the Nile, where papyrus had already been used as a medium for writing since 2000 BCE. During this time, books (which had replaced heavy clay or metal tablets) came in the form of scrolls. The leaves of the pliable papyrus plant were stuck together and rolled up, creating lightweight objects that were easy to transport but, if untitled, easily lost and confused.

"THE **TITOLO** OF PRECIOUS METALS IS AN INDICATOR OF THEIR QUALITY AND VALUE, INFLUENCING THEIR ABILITY TO WITHSTAND AIR, WATER AND TIME, WHILE STOKING THE LUSTER WITH WHICH A PIECE OF JEWELRY ILLUMINATES ITS WEARER."

The display inside Bvlgari's historic boutique on Via Condotti 10 in Rome, Sala Grande degli Argenti, Rome, 1934. Bvlgari Historical Archives



Each a masterpiece of craftsmanship—every scroll was unique and penned patiently by hand—books soon became some of the most sought-after luxury goods, coveted by a small but meticulous group of literature enthusiasts. The most beautiful manuscripts were worth as much as jewelry and traded for riches in bazaars where East met West.

Alongside the first book collectors, always on the hunt for new titles, the first great ancient libraries were also born. The most famous of them all was the Library of Alexandria, a cosmopolitan city built by Alexander the Great on the Nile Delta. A capital of culture in the ancient world, its collection spanned thousands of scrolls and included writings from the Age of Homer.

When rolled into tight cylinders, books became the bane of librarians, who found it impossible to tell them apart. This was the very reason why titles were invented: so history's first books could be identified.

Lacking imagination, the first titles summarized the contents of the work in one or two words. Written on the first page, and sometimes on the last, the title was accompanied by the Latin word *incipit*—letting the reader know that this was where the book began.

Books have evolved over the centuries, from scrolls to codices, handwriting to printing, but the noble and meteoric gesture of giving creations a title has endured.

While we might come across “untitled” paintings (arguably, in itself, a title) there are few authors who would forego the marvel of giving their stories a name, of filling readers with curiosity and anticipation.

Calling what you create by name is an act of resistance and communication. Giving a creation a title reflects a desire to preserve it, to pass it on to those who come after us.

A book, a movie, a piece of jewelry, a child, our own name: each one of us is a product of the extraordinary ties between who we are and the titles we carry.

About the author

Andrea Marcolongo is a classical philologist, University of Milan graduate, and author of *The Ingenious Language: Nine Epic Reasons to Love Greek*. Her writing focuses on themes related to Ancient Greece, classical studies, and etymology. She also writes columns for *La Stampa*, *Le Figaro*, and *ABC*.



Details of the marks with which Sotirio signed his artifacts at the end of the last century, with the initials “S.B” and the monogram SB. Bvlgari Historical Archives



Bib necklace in gold and platinum with emeralds, amethysts, turquoises and diamonds, 1968. Formerly in the Lyn Revson collection. Historical advertising campaign Ancient coin background, 1968-1970. Photographed by Gaio Bacci - Roma

PAST, PRESENT,



Incantamento, 1996. Oil on canvas, 100×100 cm.
Artwork by Carlo Maria Mariani

DOMVS EXHIBITION
WORDS MAIA ADAMS

AND FUTURE:

ROME REVERED
AS A MUSE FOR ALL TIME.

As **BVLGARI** celebrates its 140th anniversary, the Maison's Heritage & Philanthropy Department unveils a new exhibition paying homage to the Italian capital as an enduring source of inspiration.



001

“ROME HAS BEEN ETERNAL,
BUT IT HAS NOT BEEN ETERNALLY
THE SAME.”

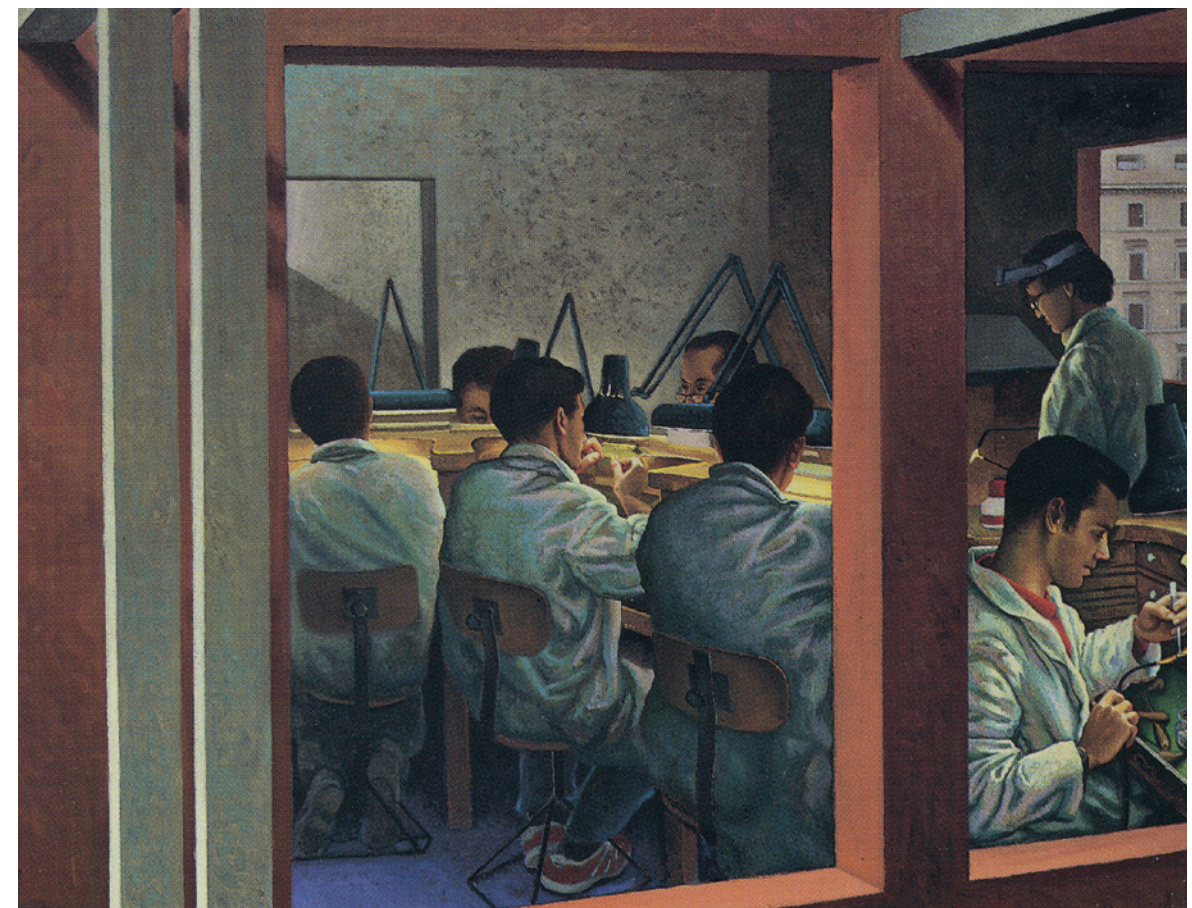
“Rome has been eternal, but it has not been eternally the same.” With these words, Bvlgari’s Heritage Curator Director, Gislain Aucremanne, captures the spirit of *Roma, the Eternal City*—the exhibition paying homage to Rome’s enduring influence on world history across a span of more than 2700 years.

In the first century BCE, the poet Tibullus referred to Rome as *Urbs Aeterna* (the Eternal City) while in his epic *Aeneid*, Virgil described Rome as *Imperium sine fine* (Empire without end). At this early point in Rome’s story, the city was already revered as an indomitable force that would not only survive the rise and fall of civilizations, and the passing of epochs, but thrive and transform in their wake. For Aucremanne, the city’s greatest asset is its many beauties, including its architecture, hills, and wide blue skies. This is why, when dreaming up an exhibition to celebrate Bvlgari’s 140th anniversary, he decided to pay tribute to Rome as the

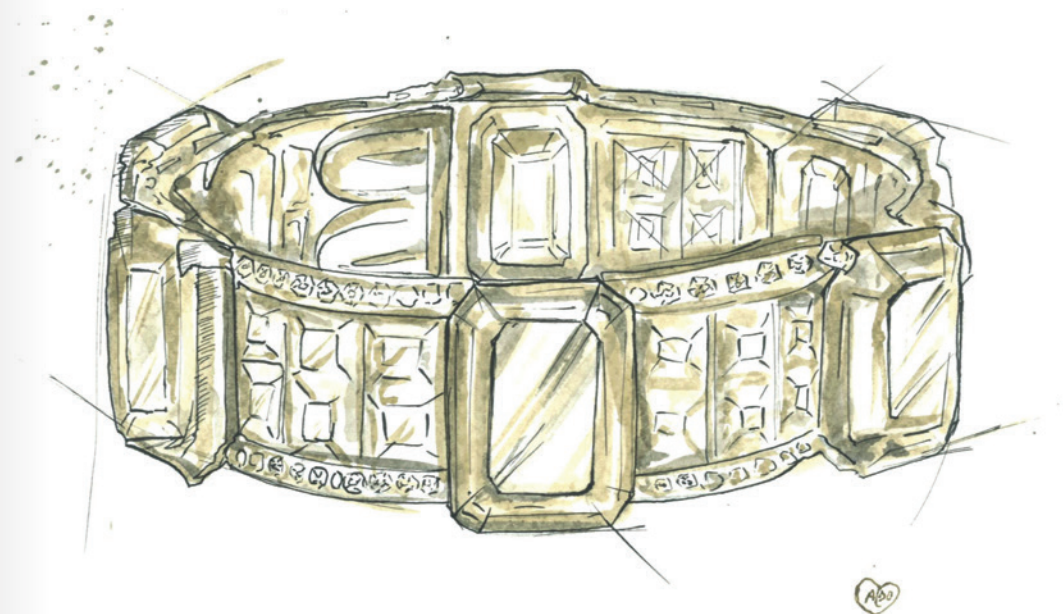
home and muse of the Maison. To communicate Rome’s everlasting yet ever-evolving quality, Aucremanne has chosen pieces from Bvlgari’s Heritage Collection, which—like the city that inspired them—are at once timeless and abidingly relevant.

A case in point is a 1940s bracelet, recently acquired by the Bvlgari Heritage Department, which has never been displayed before. Featuring citrines set in platinum and yellow gold, the piece’s fiery palette echoes the periods of dawn and dusk during *Ottobrata Romana*—a balmy period in October during which Rome is bathed in an enchanting, warm light. Alluding to the passage of days, the bracelet is “an emblem of Rome’s cyclical nature; an embodiment of eternal rebirth.”

Color, volume, and proportion are the foundational principles that have informed Bvlgari designs since the Maison was founded by Sotirio Bulgari in 1884. These pillars ensure that



002



003

- 001 Temple brooch in yellow gold with rock crystal and diamonds, ca. 1970. Historical advertising campaign *Small Bvlgari logo on a white background*, 1965–1978. Bvlgari Historical Archives
- 002 *Progetti, pensieri, paesaggi*, 1996. Oil on canvas, triptych, 120×150 cm each panel. Artwork by Carlo Bertocci
- 003 Bracelet in gold and platinum with citrines and diamonds, ca. 1940, from the Bvlgari Heritage Collection. Illustration by Aldo Sacchetti



004 Temple paperweight in gold with lapis lazuli, onyx and diamonds, ca. 1977.
From the Bvlgari Heritage Collection.
Photographer: Barrella - Studio Orizzonte Gallery



005

Bvlgari masterpieces share an identifiable signature, even as their aesthetic evolves to reflect the times in which they were created. Of this, too, the citrine bracelet is a prime example. Its elegant emerald- and square-cut gemstones, set in a geometric arrangement, echo Rome's classical architecture, as well as the Modernist stylings of the 1940s.

Asked to elaborate on other instances where Rome's historic monuments are reflected in his selection, Aucremanne explains: "Roman architecture is a strong influence for the Maison. The construction of jewelry is often architectural, and this can be seen within the exhibition in two ways. One is literal. For example, a brooch representing the facade of a temple with columns and triangular ornaments at the top is directly inspired by a piece of emblematic Roman architecture." Another example is a necklace decorated with a pattern of circles and lines picked out in gold and diamonds. These are motifs that would have appeared on temple facades,

reimagined here as a decorative device, underscoring the Maison's ability to find inspiration in Rome's rich tapestry of details and make them its own—at once recognizably Roman yet unmistakably Bvlgari.

Roman architecture has also inspired jewelry design in a more subtle (but equally significant) way, encouraging the consideration of proportions, symmetry, and geometry. The desired effect was harmony because, as Aucremanne adds: "You can have big volumes and bright colors like Baroque, but it could be over the top. To create harmony, you need to respect proportions. Since ancient times—and even the Renaissance, when you think about Leonardo Da Vinci's designs—it has been about how to relay proportions, how to select the proper colors and motifs."

As the world of luxury design becomes increasingly focused on explorations of cultural identity, consumers demand that this is done in an authentic and respectful way.

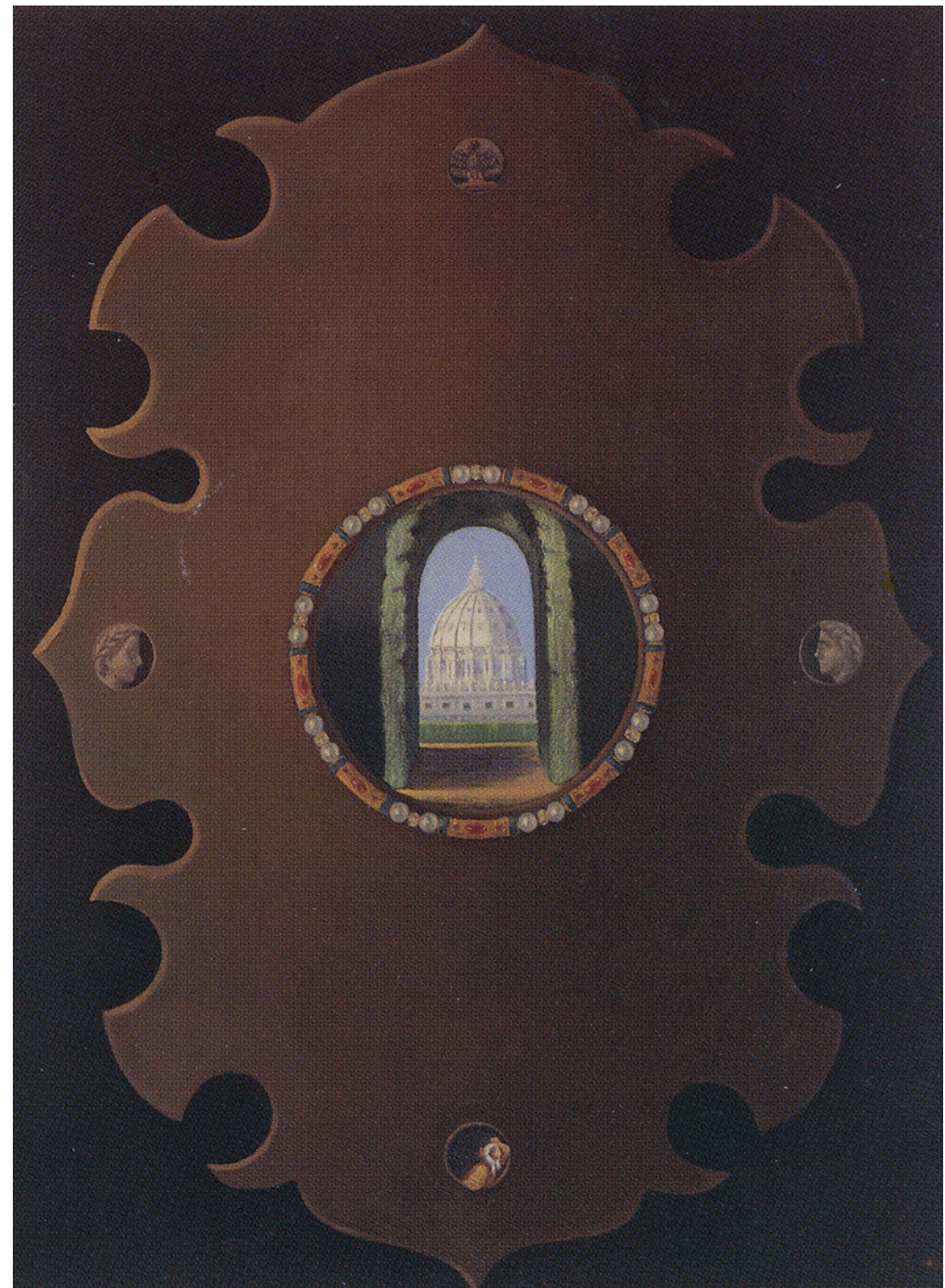


006

005 Model wearing Bvlgari jewels, including a bracelet in platinum with diamonds from the Bvlgari Heritage Collection ca. 1959. Rome, published in *Vogue Paris*, November 1961. Photographer: ©The Guy Bourdin Estate 2023, Courtesy of the Louise Alexander Gallery

006 *Testa di Afrodite*, 1997. Mixed technique on hemp, 152×214 cm. Artwork by Luca Pignatelli

007 *Segreto Romano*, 1996. Oil on canvas, 80×60 cm. Artwork by Giovanni Arcangeli



007



008



009

“AN EMBLEM OF ROME’S CYCLICAL NATURE; AN EMBODIMENT OF ETERNAL REBIRTH.”

In this regard, *Eternally Reborn* feels particularly relevant; its timing in tune with the creative zeitgeist. Rome was once an empire with territories as far afield as North Africa and Western Asia. It both influenced, and was influenced by, many civilizations. So, while the exhibition necessarily references Rome’s Italian-ness, it also centers the broader cultural inputs that have shaped Bvlgari’s design aesthetic. “Throughout history, Rome has found a way to reinvent itself,” says Aucremanne. “At the very beginning, according to legend, it was the Rome of Romulus. It has been the Rome of Caesars and emperors, the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. It was the Rome of popes in the Renaissance, and later the Rome of *The Grand Tour*—the great journey made by European aristocrats to discover the ruins of the city.”



010



011

008 *La scoperta*, 1996.
Oil on canvas, 100×80 cm. Artwork
by Stefano Di Stasio

009 Brooch in gold with agate cameo,
rubies and diamonds, 1982, from
the Bvlgari Heritage Collection.
Photographed by Barrella - Studio
Orizzonte Gallery

010 Ring in gold with citrine, rubies and
diamonds. Signed Sotirio Bulgari,
ca. 1925, from the Bvlgari Heritage
Collection. Illustration by Aldo Sacchetti

011 *Di-Amanti*, 1996.
Oil on canvas, 110×90 cm. Artwork
by Alberto Abate



012



013



014

Throughout the exhibition, the curatorial selection finds ways to explore how this melting pot of ideas has been reflected in Bvlgari's visionary output. One example is a *Giardinetto* (little garden) brooch, brimming with exuberant coral blossoms accented by emerald and diamond pistils. While the saturated color-play is distinctively Bvlgari, and the *giardinetto* tradition Roman, aesthetic flourishes—notably the bonsai-like tree erupting from a carved jade base placed in a curlicued gold basket—imbue the piece with a flavor of the Chinese designs that surely inspired it.

The exhibition includes a showcase dedicated to a selection of Serpenti pieces. Exploring this cross-cultural symbol of transformation and rebirth, the section invites

viewers to consider Rome's mythological origins and its evolution over time. As Aucremanne puts it, the serpent becomes an emblem of the city's "past, present, and future." Other items feature Greco-Roman coins, and in the case of a large bib-style neckpiece, Persian coins from the Middle Ages.

Further developing the concept of Rome as eternally changing, the exhibition includes photos, videos, and other devices that highlight the transformable properties of key jewels in the display. A 1961 suite embellished with turquoise and blue sapphire cabochons includes a necklace with a central motif that can be detached and worn separately as a brooch, and a pair of matching earrings. A rainbow-hued

015



012 Model wearing a Serpenti bracelet-watch in gold with enamel and sapphires, ca. 1967. Serpenti bracelet-watch in gold with red and yellow enamel and rubies, ca. 1967 and Serpenti bracelet-watch in gold with blue and green enamel and rubies, 1967 from the Bvlgari Heritage Collection. Published in *Vogue US*, April 1, 1971, p.120. Photographer: Irving Penn/Condé Nast US

013 *Desiderio di Pigmalione*, 1996. Oil on canvas, 100×80 cm. Artwork by Franco Giletta

014 *Giardinetto* brooch in gold and platinum with jade, corals, emeralds and diamonds, ca. 1969, from the Bvlgari Heritage Collection. Photographed by Barrella - Studio Orizzonte Gallery

015 Model Luna Bijl wearing a 1966 *Giardinetto* brooch in gold and platinum with sapphire, rubies and diamonds and a 1959 *Giardinetto* brooch in gold and platinum with sapphires, emeralds, rubies and diamonds from the Bvlgari Heritage Collection. Published in *Bvlgari—Roma: Travel Tales for Beauty Lovers*, Rizzoli, 2020. Photographer: Dan Belei



016 *Il negozio di Via Condotti, 1995.*
Oil on canvas, 85×200 cm.
Artwork by Sergio Ceccotti



017

sautoir from the late 1960s features a chain whose gemstone-studded links can be worn as a necklace to hold an exceptional heart-shaped emerald cabochon pendant. Alternatively, the design can be configured into a pair of bracelets. With their focus on styling and functionality, these convertible pieces feel especially modern. Their ingenious construction introduces a layer of technical complexity which is necessarily invisible but allows the wearer to easily customize their look and express their personality.

Roman history is present even in the space where the exhibition is displayed. Located in Bvlgari's historic boutique on *Via Condotti 10*, the Heritage Gallery — also known as *Domvs* (Latin for home) — was once the room where precious silver pieces were sold when the Maison was still a silversmith. "We worked as a team to keep the room as it was out of respect for its role as a home to historic pieces, but also to make it resonate with the public today," says Aucremanne when discussing the space, which still features many of its original 1930s fittings. A silver backdrop, installed this year in honor of Sotirio Bulgari's origins as a silversmith, introduces a striking contemporary flourish. Both a contrast and complement to the room's historic features, the backdrop will remain in place as a permanent fixture as new exhibitions are unveiled.

As Aucremanne adds in closing: "The concept of *Domvs* encapsulates Bvlgari's history, as a home to its heritage, whilst also introducing new elements that will ensure its continued relevance for generations to come."

017 *Natura morta di argenti*, 1996.
Oil on canvas, 110×90 cm.
Artwork by Thomas Corey

018 *Argento*, 1995. Oil on canvas,
50×60 cm. Artwork by Sergio Ceccotti



018

About the author

Maia Adams is the co-founder of *Adorn*, a global market intelligence consultancy dedicated to shaping the future of jewelry.

About the curator

Gislain Aucremanne is the Curator Director of Bvlgari Heritage. As ambassador, curator, and spokesperson, Aucremanne works to enrich Bvlgari's historical legacy, creating heritage exhibitions worldwide whilst collaborating with a community of international museum curators and art connoisseurs.

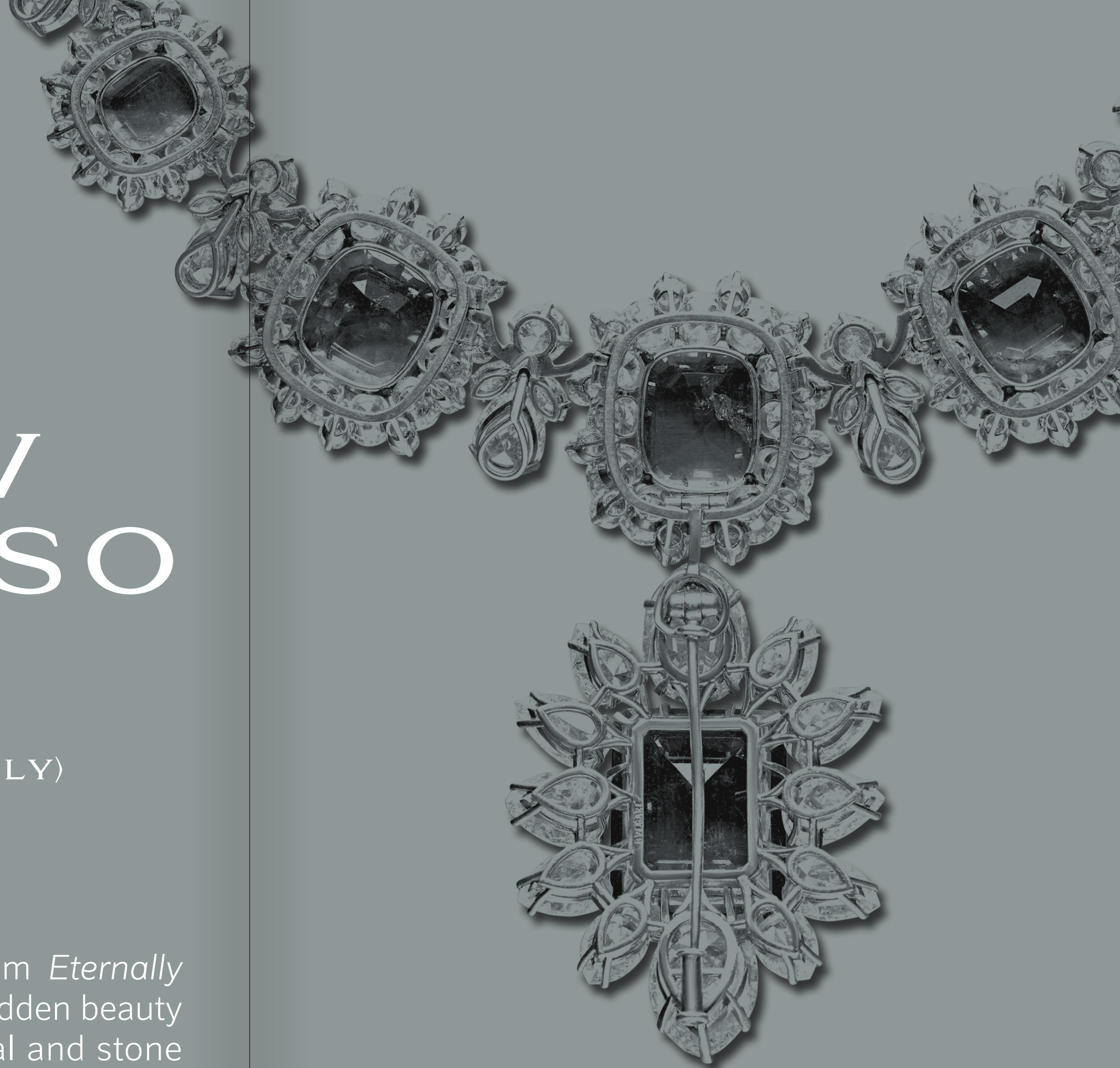
About *Eternally Reborn*

On display from May 20th to October 2024. An exhibition curated by Bvlgari's Heritage & Philanthropy Department, open to the public inside the historic boutique on *Via Condotti 10*, Rome.

VERS VIRTUOSO

(FOR YOUR EYES ONLY)

What do the backs of the pieces from *Eternally Reborn* have to reveal? Discover the hidden beauty and intimate connection, where metal and stone meet skin.





“DETAILS THAT REVEAL
THEMSELVES ONLY
TO THE POSSESSOR CONFER
THEIR OWN KIND OF PRIVILEGE
AND LUXURY. THEY ARE SHARED
CONFIDENCES THAT BIND
MAKER TO WEARER, ARTIST
TO PATRON, CRAFTSPERSON
TO BUYER.”

Necklace in platinum with emeralds and diamonds, 1958–1962. Formerly belonging to the Elizabeth Taylor collection, it is now part of the Bvlgari Heritage Collection.

VERSO VIRTUOSO

Sometime around 1947, when the artist Yves Klein was teetering between precocious youth and avant-garde adulthood, he lay on his back on a beach with two friends, discussing how they would divide the world between them. One—a poet—claimed the vegetable world. The other chose both the earth and the animal kingdom. Klein, however, stretched up his hands to the blue sky, mimed turning it round as if it were a canvas, before signing the reverse. The blue expanse of the heavens, with all the connotations of freedom, divinity, spirituality, and limitless potential contained within, were now his. He would later claim it as his “greatest” and “most beautiful” work of art.

The backs and interiors of objects meant for display are often intriguing, enigmatic, even magical spaces. Charles Brooks, a photographer based in New Zealand, has made a special study of shooting the insides of musical instruments. The images are at once intimate and uncanny. Cellos become cavernous cathedrals; saxophones resemble leafy tunnels through golden-hour woodland. And while few would guess that a young artist’s signature can be found on the sky’s verso, this is hardly the only piece harboring surprises. Other artworks, turned frame-to-wall, reveal the explanatory notes, preparatory sketches or doodled self-portraits, wax seals, inventory numbers or packing directions—“second bedroom”—of previous owners. In some cases, an artwork’s derriere was more overtly titillating. Most viewers of the Martin van Meytens’ apparently devout *Kneeling Nun*, painted around 1731, would have been scandalized to know the reverse depicts the nun from behind, her habit hitched to her waist.

Details that reveal themselves only to the possessor confer their own kind of privilege and luxury. They

are shared confidences that bind maker to wearer, artist to patron, craftsperson to buyer. Soft, refined lining fabrics, pressed French seams, and decorative details have been esteemed as the mark of supreme couture. The same can be said for jewelry. Most pieces are designed with a front and a back, and the former trumps the latter. It is from the front that the choicest gems glitter to their best advantage, and it is here that the design elements are at their most harmonious. The reverse functions like the “below stairs” of a grand house. Just as a country mansion has a supporting cast who must prepare meals, sweep floors, light fires, and press linens, so—in the setting of a piece of jewelry—other essential functions must be carried out. Light must be allowed in and channeled so that gems can gleam; clasps and pins need to secure pieces on necks and wrists and, if a piece is convertible, there must be engineering in place to allow the transformation to occur.

Nevertheless, it is with the back and interior of a piece of jewelry that the wearer will have the most intimate knowledge and connection, where metal and stone meet skin. So it is here, too, that extra care and attention lavished by designers and craftspeople will be most appreciated. Adding decorative elements to settings, weaving inscriptions within the bands of rings or secreting diamonds where only a wearer might see them are declarations of esteem as tender as a *billet-doux*. Yves Klein, whose signing of the sky was the beginning of his life-long and extremely passionate love affair with the color blue, would no doubt appreciate the sentiment.

About the author

Kassia St. Clair is a British cultural historian and writer. She is the author of *The Secret Lives of Colour*, *The Golden Thread* and *The Race to the Future* and has written for publications including *The Economist*, *Elle Decoration* and *Wired*.

001



Monete Tubogas choker
 in two-tone gold with silver
 Greek coins, ca. 1974,
 Bvlgari Heritage Collection

This necklace is emblematic of the Tubogas family. Rows of polished interlinks in white and yellow gold glisten from all sides, while the back reveals how the three silver ancient Greek coins are set in a singular yellow gold bezel, screwed into the piece. Only known to its owner, the origin and date of the coins are engraved around the central disk (*Corinto Statere IV sec. a.C.*).

There are two sides to every story, and so to every coin. Indeed, a view of the back enriches the coins' ancient story. The order in which the motifs appear changes when you turn the piece over. From the front: *Athena with Corinthian helmet*, preceded by *Pegasus*, and followed by another instance of *Athena with Corinthian helmet*. When viewed from the reverse, the order changes.



002



Convertible necklace-brooch
in gold and platinum with turquoises,
sapphires and diamonds, 1961,
Bvlgari Heritage Collection

At first sight of the back, you may wonder why the design incorporated openwork for each turquoise, since these stones are opaque and this technique is mostly employed to illuminate gems from behind. That said, isn't it magical to be able to see the turquoise accents from the back too? The goldsmiths have meticulously created a lace-like pattern for the whole piece, in which the imprint of each gem — big or small — is seen in the yellow gold skeleton displayed on the reverse. This view highlights the soft drape of the necklace. Akin to a gold chain, it sits around the neck like a second skin. It also showcases the mechanism by which the detachable brooch slides in place onto the main necklace. Its two pins fit inside two long cylinders equipped with clasps on top. Freed from the necklace, the brooch would make a beautiful embellishment in the hair or on a scarf.



003



Brooch in gold with agate cameo, rubies and diamonds, 1982, Bvlgari Heritage Collection

Admiring the decoration on the front of the cameo, one might almost forget it was carved from an oval piece of agate. Whilst the marbling of the stone gives the scenery surrounding *Amphitrite*—goddess of the sea—the sense of a pedimental sculpture, the reverse showcases opalescent nuances of ocher and imaginary motifs, which are enhanced by the yellow gold setting. The devil being in the details, the side tips of the brooch are set with tapered diamonds, followed by a cabochon ruby. Nestled in an openwork setting, these gems can also be seen on the reverse. With the back of the brooch sitting flush against their chest, the wearer can enjoy all the healing benefits of quartz.



004



Ring in gold with citrine, rubies and diamonds, ca. 1925, signed "Sotirio Bulgari", Bvlgari Heritage Collection

The wearer of this ring will be one step ahead of everyone else thanks to a hidden secret placed on the back. Before revealing what it is, let's admire the baroque angels (carved into the yellow gold shanks), which support a sizable citrine bordered by a yellow gold braid set with alternating diamonds and rubies. Upon flipping the ring over, the first thing to notice is the wide open-worked setting for the main gem that lets light shine through. The signature of Sotirio Bulgari is also engraved into the sizing insert affixed at the bottom of the ring. And just there, scintillating at us, is a rose-cut diamond, hidden from onlookers, yet reminding us of the intricate décor on the front. A precious touch for the wearer's eyes only.



005

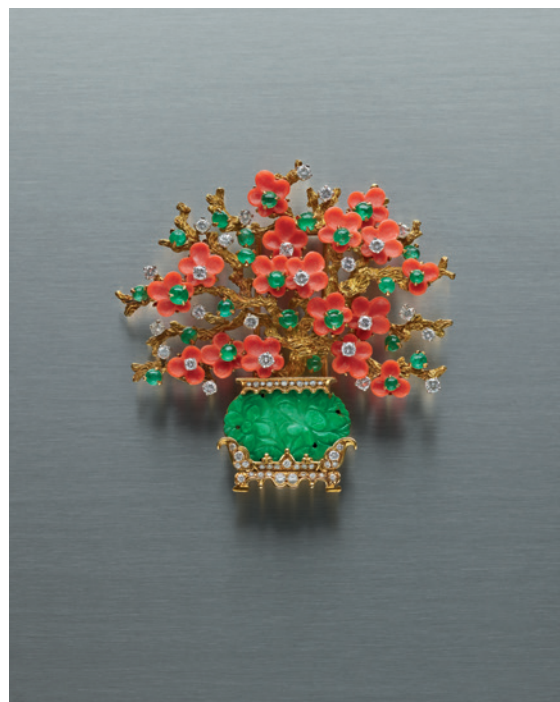


Convertible sautoir-bracelets
in gold with emeralds, rubies,
amethysts, turquoises, citrines
and diamonds, ca. 1969,
Bulgari Heritage Collection

This transformable necklace symbolizes the Dolce Vita and is as beautiful from the back as it is from the front thanks to its mood-enhancing quality. It features a rainbow-colored chain made of oversized links, a sizable cabochon emerald pendant, an entirely open-worked reverse, and a yellow gold plate lining the back of the emerald. Boasting a part Byzantine, part Arabic rosace design, this plate is secured to the piece by four pin attachments. The pear-shaped pendant is detachable thanks to two rectangular gold bars hooking onto a link on each side. Only the eagle-eyed will notice the diamonds set into the bottom end of the hooks.



006



“Giardinetto” brooch in gold and platinum with jade, corals, emeralds and diamonds, ca. 1969, Bvlgari Heritage Collection

This China-inspired brooch is composed of a yellow gold vessel set with a carved emerald, from which a cherry bush blossoms in red and green. What is striking is that the wearer can actually also indulge in the springtime scenery from the back of the piece—it is almost a mirror image of the front (minus the diamonds). As compensation, one is able to see how each coral flower is screwed in and to enjoy a clearer view of the chiseled gold work. Similarly, the back of the jade has been enhanced with a yellow gold openwork plate. The motif is simple and delicate, its oval shape framed by a wreath of petals like a giant hybrid flower—the *yin* to the *yang* of the intricate floral pattern on the front.



007



Bracelet in gold and platinum
with citrines and diamonds, ca. 1940,
Bvlgari Heritage Collection

In the making of this bracelet, it was important to highlight the chromatic power of the citrine collection. From the six larger emerald-cut citrines to the thirty-six smaller square-cut ones, the exceptional color matching was to be noticed first and foremost; and for that reason, the back had to be entirely open-worked. Hidden from the front are the mechanisms that allow the piece to be flexible around the wearer's wrist: hinges that bridge the main gems to the rows of smaller citrines. As much as the former are protruding from the bracelet body into the foreground, all of the citrines, small and large, appear as though on an equal plane. Front or back, the wearer can bask not in the sun, but in the warm glow of the exceptional gemstones thanks to their calibrated setting.



008



Necklace in platinum with emeralds and diamonds, ca. 1962. Formerly in the collection of Elizabeth Taylor

What did Elizabeth Taylor love most about this transformable necklace? The seventeen color-matched emeralds, the garland diamond design, the detachable emerald pendant, or the back? Without hesitation, all of the above might be the answer. On the back, its white gold openwork demonstrates the expertise of a Maison, which — let's not forget — made its mark first as a master silversmith. An exquisite feat of engineering, note the amount of intricate soldering necessary to assemble the garland. Each emerald is elevated from its metal frame, their sides also catching the light when — most importantly — the necklace is worn.



LOVE



STORY

Veruschka wearing the convertible sautoir-bracelets.
Published in *Vogue US*, March 1970. Photographed
by Franco Rubartelli/Condé Nast US

Convertible sautoir-bracelets in gold
with emeralds, rubies, amethysts,
turquoises, citrines and diamonds ca. 1969,
from the Bvlgari Heritage Collection



In 2018, BVLGARI acquired one of its most iconic pieces at a Sotheby's auction: an extraordinary object made in 1969, famously modeled by Veruschka and photographed by Franco Rubartelli for *Vogue US*. This is the story of a sautoir necklace, its life and legacy retraced.

I think many of the jewels in the Heritage Collection have a fascinating story behind them and have truly enriched our archives. Many of them are important and many of them have a history. Today we are going to look at one incredible creation, which was acquired a few years ago at a Sotheby's auction.

It's an extraordinary piece, unique from our past. Behind this item, amongst other things, is a great love story which I think is worth telling. It's a story of friendship, love, passion, and gratitude.

This extraordinary object was made by Bvlgari in 1969. In 2018, we discovered that the masterpiece—which we had wanted to add to our collection for at least fifteen years—was finally up for auction.

The date for the auction was set for November 18th, 2018 and we successfully acquired the piece. Having this piece in our collection was incredibly important, but now, knowing who it had belonged to was of even greater importance.

Once the piece was acquired, we set out to try and find the name of the owner from the auction, but it was proving to be a challenge. However, on the auction website there was a portrait of the previous owner—an elegant woman wearing the necklace around her neck. So we used this portrait as our starting point. I did some research and tried to find out who painted it. I could make out the name on the bottom of the painting: *Ricardo Macarrón*, a Spanish painter. However, having seen that he had passed away in 2004, I tried to find out if he had a family and if any of his relatives would be able to help me find out who the subject in the painting was. I looked for information online, eventually finding a woman called Susana Macarrón. She lived in Los Angeles and ran an art foundation, so I thought she could be related to the deceased artist.

I wrote her an email, explaining that Bvlgari had acquired this necklace and that we were looking for the woman in the portrait. I wasn't sure if Ricardo Macarrón was her dad or another relative, but maybe she could tell us about the woman in the painting. Ms. Macarrón replied to me after a couple of weeks, saying:

"Yes, I'm the daughter of artist Ricardo Macarrón. I live in Los Angeles and my dad's studio is in Madrid, so I can't help you from here. But I'll be in Spain soon, and will be able to do some research for you."

After a few weeks, she went to Madrid and got back to me. She said she had managed to find the photo used for the portrait, and on the back of the photo was the name of the woman in the painting. Now the only thing left



Reproduced portrait of the former owner of the convertible sautoir-bracelets, 1975. Artwork by Ricardo Macarrón

to do was to find the woman. So then, knowing her name, we did some further research and managed to find a foundation in Switzerland with her name.

I wrote a letter explaining everything: that I was writing from Bvlgari, that we had acquired this important piece at the auction, and that we would like to know if the woman in the portrait presented on the auction website was indeed the woman to whom I was writing. If this was the case, I asked if this woman could get in touch with me as I wanted more information about who had owned this piece. A few weeks passed before I got a phone call from a Swiss number. I picked up and on the other end of the call was a woman with a mature voice, saying: "Hello? I'm the woman in the portrait." So you can imagine how emotional and moving that was for the both of us. I was overjoyed to have been contacted by this woman,



Drawing of model wearing the convertible sautoir-bracelets. Published in *Fashion and Jewellery against Aids*, 1997. Artwork by Thierry Perez

who was on the other end of the phone crying. She was crying tears of joy because she was so happy to have read my letter and to learn that her beloved jewelry had made it back to our Maison. This was incredibly gratifying for me and an incredible joy for us both. I asked if I could meet her and we arranged a date to meet in Lausanne, where she lived with her husband.

On the day we met, she told me the most beautiful story. The story goes that she and her husband were in Rome in 1973 to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary, and that they were staying at the Hassler Hotel. Since it was their anniversary, her husband wanted to give her a special gift in celebration of this important milestone. They decided to go to Bvlgari as the concierge of the Hassler Hotel had said Bvlgari was the most accomplished jeweler in Rome, so they would definitely be able to find something special there. Her husband's idea was to buy a cigarette case, as the woman loved to smoke at the time. So he was thinking of buying a nice cigarette case with diamonds and other precious stones. They headed down the Spanish Steps, across the Piazza di Spagna, and into the store on Via Condotti. A man, one of our salespeople at the time, welcomed them and showed them around our store. They looked at purses, cigarette cases, jewelry boxes—anything the woman might find interesting.

A beautiful rapport blossomed between the salesman and the couple because they were all art lovers. The Swiss couple had a collection of artworks and loved painting, and our salesman was, of course, fascinated with jewelry and art. At one point, the salesman wanted to show the woman an extraordinary piece as a gift. It had just arrived from America and had been in an editorial in Vogue magazine, worn by a famous model. The model in question was Veruschka. The article was published in 1973. When they saw it, having opened the safe and the big pink case in which the piece was being kept, they were both mesmerized by the beauty of this necklace. When I met the couple in Lausanne, the husband told me: "I couldn't not give this piece to my wife, because she was so strikingly beautiful. How beautiful my wife was at that moment." So, he decided to get this incredibly beautiful piece for his wife. The wife, in his words, had been touched. He wanted to give her something extraordinary and she couldn't believe her eyes, because they had come to Rome and had wanted to buy a cigarette case—a nice cigarette case, but still, a cigarette case.

This piece was much more special than what she was expecting at the time. So they then returned to Switzerland, delighted with their

new piece, and to thank her husband for this incredible gesture, the woman wanted to gift him a portrait. This was why the woman had this beautiful portrait painted by Ricardo Macarrón, unbeknownst to her husband. Macarrón was a famous painter who made portraits of royal figures such as King Juan Carlos of Spain, Princess Grace of Monaco, and the bullfighter Luis Miguel Dominguín—these artworks are at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid. A couple of years later, she gave the finished portrait to her husband, and they hung it in their home in Normandy. It is still displayed there today.

The Bvlgari company, which is today one of the most recognized and influential high-jewelry Maisons, is the result of its heritage and the stories it has accumulated over the years. Heritage is definitely a key cornerstone in our narrative. The 140 years of history we're celebrating this year are surely the result of countless steps, countless creations, and countless ideas from our pioneers—those of Sotirio, of course, then those of his sons, Giorgio and Costantino.

Heritage is always an intrinsic part of everything we do today, across the entire company. The pieces we create are definitely inspired by our heritage, offering consistency yet a continuous evolution. The records we have in our archives, including thousands of designs, are testament to a never-ending story that has allowed us to blaze a trail so many times.

About the author

Historical Archive & Museum Officer, Monica Brannetti, oversees all objects pertaining to the Maison's Heritage Collection. With the aim of enriching and nourishing the Maison's archives, she acquires historical pieces and retraces their lives by connecting with former owners and image-makers. Her findings are used in creating exhibitions and other heritage related events.

About the object

Convertible sautoir-bracelets, that transform into a necklace, in gold with emeralds, rubies, amethysts, turquoises, citrines, and diamonds, ca. 1969, Bvlgari Heritage Collection.

Bangle in gold and platinum with emeralds, rubies and diamonds, 1956. Historical advertising campaign Vulcano background, 1972. Photographed by Jean-Pierre Maurer

