

Costume Jewellery
Weekly Times Column
By Warren Joel

byjoel

We all know how valuable gold and diamond jewellery can be but there is also a large amount of costume and imitation jewellery highly collectable. Imitation and costume jewellery has been around as long as the original items of gold and diamond jewellery have been collected and used.

Jewellery by its very nature is designed to be worn by men and women to decorate their bodies and has been used for this purpose for thousands of years. Jewellery has always been made with precious metals and stones, but as far back as when jewellery first became wearable we have made and used less expensive copies. As the popularity of wearing jewellery has increased so has the quantity and diversity of costume jewellery.

There are some beautiful 18th and 19th Century French paste items of costume jewellery that were designed to imitate diamonds. These imitation items have now become collectable in their own right, not worth anything like the original diamonds but still collectable. By the mid-20th century the fashion of using costume and imitation jewellery was in full swing and widely available in most department stores.

So from a collector's point of view what do we look for when there is such a wide selection of this type of jewellery? By their very nature there is almost no value in the metal and stones used, so we need to look for either who made it or just for its design value. Most of the fashion designer labels and department stores have at one time or other produced a line of costume jewellery, so that association will add value to an item, over the same item with no known maker.

I think the key to the value of costume jewellery is all in great design, and there are some beautiful articles to collect. We are not talking thousands of dollars but hundreds of dollars for something that is wearable everyday.

Next week: Silver Plate.

Free Valuation for Weekly Times readers.

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Warren Joel

Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.

www.byjoel.com.au