

WOW

JEWELLERY

SINGAPORE'S
PREMIER
WATCH
PERIODICAL



Return of the Serpent

The Incantati collection presents a fresh take on Bulgari's iconic snake

TRENDS SPOTLIGHT

Talismanic jewels, gemstones within gemstones, ladies' skeletons and tourbillons, ear cuffs, and more

SINGAPORE SPECIAL

Seven trailblazers transform our local gem and jewellery landscape

+PLUS

- Most famous designers you don't know
- The latest métiers d'art watches
- All about diamonds and coloured gems

\$10 #4 JEWELLERY 2016



THE VINTAGE CONNOISSEUR
Brenda Kang of Revival Jewels



When Brenda Kang first started Revival Jewels in end-2013 after a 15-year tenure at Christie's, she was the only dedicated luxury vintage jewels and objects dealer in Singapore. While her business has grown over the past three years and the local jewellery market has also become more interesting and varied, Revival remains a unique outfit, and Kang, still one of the few experts in this field in Asia.

Revival offers fine antique and vintage jewellery, watches and objets d'art that are scarcely seen in Southeast Asia. Kang also sources jewellery on clients' requests, performs private re-selling, accepts items for sale on consignment, and acts as an agent on sellers' behalf.

During her time with Christie's, Kang was stationed at its offices in Europe and the US, where she held senior specialist positions that saw her acquiring and assessing vintage jewellery, and handling high-profile auctions from the estates of famous collectors such as Doris Duke and Elizabeth Taylor. The trained gemologist was later working as Christie's regional representative for Singapore and China, when she finally gave it all up to pursue her dream of sharing her love of vintage and estate jewellery with her fellow Singaporeans.

Ever since opening her by-appointment-only salon and office at International Building in Orchard Road, she has been busy jetting internationally to source for fine creations, as well as organising trunk shows and client meetings regionally.

YOU HAVE SUCH PASSION FOR VINTAGE AND ESTATE JEWELLERY. WHAT MAKES THEM SO SPECIAL?

They feature detailed workmanship and rare crafts, many which are difficult to reproduce today, and even if it could be reproduced, it would cost too much. Many of the gems and diamonds used in vintage or antique jewels are from old mines or sources that no longer exist. The design, history, and provenance of a piece can come with great stories, giving each a certain character that we don't often find in modern jewellery. If you compare jewellery retail prices versus vintage, well-chosen vintage pieces often offer better value and will hold their value better in the long run. Just like buying art, there has always been a healthy secondary market for special vintage pieces. It's a matter of knowing what to buy, when, and where to sell.

HOW FAR DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE COME IN YOUR QUEST TO INTRODUCE VINTAGE JEWELLERY TO SINGAPOREANS?

Although business has grown by 50 per cent since 2013 (and we had already made money in our first year), Singapore's growth is slow compared to the North Asian markets like China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan where I already have some clients even before starting Revival. They form two-thirds of my business. Many Asians still can't get past the taboo of owning vintage or estate jewellery that had been worn by someone who might be deceased. Having said this, I am seeing some encouraging signs locally – more young Singaporeans are buying Edwardian engagement rings. This is usually their first vintage buy, and I see it as their entry into the world of fine vintage jewellery.

HAS THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED VAN CLEEF & ARPELS EXHIBITION AT THE ARTSCIENCE MUSEUM INCREASED PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AND APPRECIATION FOR VINTAGE JEWELLERY?

It certainly has. The exhibits were very well curated and I could see the visitors' awe and amazement. I believe over 400 pieces from the



Kang's own vintage-inspired inscribed label features items such as the Love Letters pendant and cuff bangle

maison's archives and some pieces on loan from private collectors, all spanning over 100 years of history, were showcased. It got Singaporeans interested in learning more about the definitive styles of different eras, and for instance, what provenance means. I received more queries about my collection and also more pertinent questions. Education certainly plays a big part in generating interest.

YOU HAVE ALSO LAUNCHED A SELF-DESIGNED, EDWARDIAN-INSPIRED JEWELLERY COLLECTION CALLED LOVE LETTERS.

Love Letters is doing very well with two collections out, but I'm focusing on expanding the business at the moment. I'm planning to open an office in Hong Kong next year where I have a stable growing clientele. This will be a new challenge as rental costs are high in Hong Kong and I would need to train someone up so that she is able to add value while advising clients on the pieces.

WHAT OTHER PLANS DO YOU HAVE?

I'm also looking to develop an e-commerce side to the business where items under \$10,000 are available online. We have a younger generation of collectors who are comfortable with making big-ticket purchases over the internet. We are also moving to Wheelock Place at the end of 2016, where we will command a retail space of 700 sq ft – twice the size of our current office space in International Building. I am very excited about this as it will give Revival more visibility and walk-in customers.

Visit revivaljewels.com for more information.



Van Cleef & Arpels mother-of-pearl, chrysoptase, and diamond ear clips