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**SARAH BERNHARDT AND THE STYLISTICS OF THE JEWELRY ART NOUVEAU  
IN FRANCE AT THE TURN OF THE XIX AND XX CENTURIES**

**DSc. Julia Romanenkova**

Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Variety Arts, Kyiv, Ukraine  
ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6741-7829>  
libraryOM@gmail.com

**Ph. D. Denys Sharykov**

Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Variety Arts, Kyiv, Ukraine  
ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3757-5559>  
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i.bratus@kubg.edu.ua

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ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0613-3934>  
glnkuzmenko36@gmail.com

**Ph. D. Olha Konovalova**

Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Kyiv, Ukraine  
ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1782-4757>  
olgakonovalova@i.ua

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**Abstract**

The research object is the phenomenon of the influence of the actress Sarah Bernhardt on creating the stylistics of the French version of the jewelry Art Nouveau. The article emphasizes the poor bibliography as regarding the jewelry art of this period, as well as the creative work of specific artists. There is given a review analysis of the main properties of modern in jewelry art, stylistic attributes are prioritized, as well as the usage of new materials, techniques, aiming for new forms and composition decisions in the presence of reminiscences of the jewelry art of previous epochs, which is the reason for some eclecticism of a number of works. With the example of the tandem of S. Bernhardt as one of the most requested actresses of the epoch along with A. Mucha, G. Fouquet and R. Lalique as the most famous jewelers and designers of that time the article reviews the role of famous artistic personalities in establishing the career of new jewelry masters.

**Keywords**

Art Nouveau – Jewelry art – Sarah Bernhardt – Georges Fouquet – Alphonse Mucha

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## Introduction

The history of jewelry art bears not so many periods which could be considered as well researched. First of all by the fact that there is not that much material left, which could give a comprehensive complex analysis. The fate of jewelry art of any historical epoch is almost always a tragic one. The works of the jewelry world, as well as costumes and accessories transfer the spirit of the age, its vibe at their best, because they were inseparably connected with their owners and were depending on their personal taste. But the fact that the masterpieces of the jewelry world were created from materials, mainly having a high material value, was leading to an unfortunate destiny – a lot is lost irrevocably, something was stolen and therefore utterly disappeared, something was melted and sold as jewelry scrap, something was remade. That is why the bibliography of the jewelry art leaves room for improvement, there are few complex researches where an art history analysis of style formation in the jewelry art could be found, as well as an analysis of the artistic value of the works, their history and a purely technological aspect of the creation of jewelry.

## Literature review

The works dedicated to the history of jewelry art of separate historical periods are prevalent but they are overwhelmingly lacking of information about the technology of creating pieces of art, the materials and techniques, whereas the practice oriented studies in the field of jewelry apply only implicitly towards the historical criteria. A little more luck have the jewelry masterpieces of specific historical epochs, rich with world famous historical jewelry, having more exploitations. Primarily it applies to Ancient Egypt (thank to the Gold of Tutankhamen), Antique (thanks to the Gold of Schliemann). The Middle Ages are in a less advantageous position, aside from general reasons there is also a lack of data on masters, which are left very few. A little easier is the situation with Renaissance, the vogue of noble jewelry has done its job, the anonymity of the art receded into the background and the flowering of art in general provoked and popularized jewelry. But this stage in history is rich with gaps. A little more is known about the famous Diamond age in the jewelry art, the XVIII century, which presented the world many jewelry masterpieces, from watches to tobacco boxes, from jewelry bouquets to dressing cases. These epochs are a little luckier thanks to the fact that a lot of unique jewelry survived and received with time the status of historical ones, because of which we can lift the veil over the jewelry image of the whole epoch<sup>1</sup>.

But one of the hardest for comprehension and analysis epochs in the history of jewelry art is the epoch of modern, which has not so many researches<sup>2</sup>. One of the most rapid, short, contrastive and based on paradoxes transformation stages of the jewelry fashion is at the turn of the XIX and XX centuries. Despite of the fact that this phenomenon took place only one century ago it became one of the most difficult ones for analysis, its nature is too eclectic, synthetic, capricious and questionable. Up to nowadays there are not so many researches on the jewelry of modern, whereas most of them are dedicated either

<sup>1</sup> S. Afon'kin, Famous jewels (Moscow: Kristall, 2003); A. Astakhov, Alfons Mucha. Masterpieces of Art Nouveau (Moscow: Belyy gorod, 2019); I. Lendl, Alfons Mucha (Moscow: Magma, 2018); D. Bennet & D. Maskett, Jewellery (Moscow: Art-rodnik, 2005); M. Besedina, The most famous gems and jewelry (Moscow: Olimp, Astrel', 2009); Y. Brunhammer, Jewels of Lalique (Paris: Flammarion, 1999); Y. Brunhammer, Art Deco Style (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984) y A. Moskvina, Jewels of the world (Moscow: AST, Astrel', Yermak, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> A. Ellridzh, Alfons Mucha. The triumph of the Art Nouveau style (Moscow: Magma, 2001); U. Khardi, Art Nouveau Style Guide (Moscow: Raduga, 2008).

to local style variants (French, Belgian, English, American, Russian, Scandinavian branches), or to specific persons, visual analyzers, inspirators of style in jewelry (René Lalique, Alphonse Mucha, representatives of the Fabergé, Tiffany, Fouquet dynasties). There are also researches about the most famous jewel houses, companies, which became the brand identities of the jewelry epoch, which happened with the Tiffany & Co. company (since 1837), William B. Ker company (since 1891), Unger Brothers company (since 1878), Liberty & Co. company (since 1875), Cartier company (since 1874), Fouquet jewelry factory (since 1860), jewel house Boucheron (since 1858)<sup>3</sup>, i.e. about the legends of jewelry history, conceiving right around that time. However a special page in the history of the jewelry world has written the tandem of the artist, jewelers and the actress – Alphonse Mucha<sup>4</sup> and Sarah Bernhardt<sup>5</sup>.

Many works were dedicated to each of them, but the role of the actress in establishing and developing the new style in jewelry art and otherwise the role of jewelry in Art Nouveau for creating the image and stage persona of the actress are although mentioned quite often but are considered mostly casually. The history of culture knows many examples, where jewelry played a significant role in establishing the relationships between people of art and the world leaders<sup>6</sup>. But in the history of culture on the edge of the centuries exactly this event could be named as the most unique one. This cooperation itself, decisive for every participant of the history, will be the main object of interest in this article, which aim is the actualization of the artistic interaction of the legendary actress and jewelers, becoming not only the trend setters in the jewelry world, but also creators of a new style.

### **Modern in jewelry art: regarding the issue and nature of style creation**

The most interesting, questionable and complicated events in the history of art are always those at the turn of the centuries. A wonderful confirmation of this regularity has become the style, which overflowed all Europe on the edge of the XIX and XX centuries – modern. The style, overwhelming all Europe and transforming into Art Nouveau in France and Belgium, Liberty in Italy, Jugendstil in Germany, Secession in Austria brightly characterizes the break of the epochs in the body of art, it combines incongruous, it is based on contradictions, contrasts and paradoxes, which defines every kind of the art. Modern has created a new page in the history of architecture, figural arts, which is written in many researches, but one of the most outstanding and particular aspects is its jewelry polyphony. On top of that according to all stylistic criteria modern could also be called a specific reincarnation of mannerism, if speaking explicitly about the jewelry Art Nouveau. The French version of the style has become one of the most significant, specific and spectacular. France, which returned its priority in the cultural field in the period of impressionism and once again gaining the attention of the whole world in the last third of the XIX century, continued to fastening unwavering gazes also in the Art Nouveau epoch. The wave which was called the contradiction to eclecticism, is actually synthetic in many aspects, but in contrast to

<sup>3</sup> A. Moskvina, *Jewels of the world* (Moscow: AST, Astrel', Yermak, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> B. Nikiforov & V. Chernova, *Jewelry* (Rostov n/D.: Feniks, 2006); L. Passos & M. Fernanda, *René Lalique at the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum* (Milan: Skira / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2008); S.-O. Pikon, *Sarah Bernhardt* (Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 2012) y J. Romanenkova; I. Bratus & A. Gunka "Historical jewels in the museums of the world". *Agathos*, num 11 iss 1 (2020): 132-144.

<sup>5</sup> V. Singayevskiy, *The most legendary jewels of the world* (Moscow: Astrel', 2011); S. Sternou, *A: Art Nouveau. The spirit of a beautiful era* (Moscow: Belfaks, 1997; N. Timoshchuk, *Jewelry secrets. Kazan'*, "Poligraficheskoye-izdatel'skiy kompleks "Ideal-Press", 2012 y J. Trayna, *Unique Jewels* (Moscow: KRONPRESS, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> R. Ul'mer, *Alfonso Mucha* (Moscow: Art-rodnik, 2002)



eclecticism this synthesis was often limited. However sometimes modern was very colored and incoherent, which already bears a contradiction. Modern has overwhelmed all kinds of art and every occurrence of it inherent contrast, ingenuity, often scandalous behavior, novelty and experimenting. Of course these features perfectly fall on fashion as well, in combination with which there are developing the main decorative and applied arts. The history of jewelry is first of all directly connected with the history of costume, hair style, and this sphere has many bright examples, which is seen foremost in feminine fashion. Traditional nature, classic forms, restraint by courtesy, typical for earlier time, become archaic and fashion gains splashes of freedom, relaxedness and novelty. First of all it refers to the world of art, the trend setters are often its representatives. Especially significant influence on the creation of fashion tendencies of that time comes from representatives of the demi-monde, famous actresses, ballet dancers, where each appearance in the public could lead to a new turn of fashion decisions. It could be said that the fashion peak originates from the Bottom of Paris. The tendency to see as trend setters representatives of the artistic community was characteristic not only for France, in the beginning of the XX century the legendary Isadora Duncan allows herself liberties in clothes, as in everyday living, as well as in a scenic costume, which soon will take over the whole artistic world. She dances in a light peplos, without a tight corset, in a short while the whole ballet world will clap the barefooted Isadora adopting her innovations. But we should not forget another paradox of the epoch, the same Isadora being in Russia pays together with students a visit of acknowledgement and adoration towards Mathilda Kschessinskaya, who as it is known was an academic ballet dancer, holding to the classic traditions, which although did not prevent her to participate in several performances of M. Fokin.

The turn of the centuries, marked by modern, has justified its reference completely. On the one hand it is the tiredness from traditional decisions in any kind of the art, as well as the aspiration to novelty and bold experiments, and on the other hand many of these experiments are based on the usage of exactly traditional decisions, their transformations and exploitation. This is not the single paradox of modern. The synthesis of hypertrophied forms and motives of previous historical epochs engenders a new event, which has grown during the time into the negation of inherent fundamentals. The same goes for mannerism, which was initially build on the imitation of Renaissance ideals and as time passed transformed in its negation. And modern therefore could be conceived as some reincarnation of mannerism, its another embodiment, particularly because even the attributive part is largely compatible with the mannerist. Modern is established on the devotion of its masters, first of all those of ornamental art with Japan culture, i.e. the striving to exotics, which results in irregular forms and motives, enthusiasm for Ancient Near East, foremost for Ancient Egypt, and inclination to the revival of the spirit of Middle Ages, Renaissance. It means the new style is the synthesis of former traditions. But at the same it turns them in its own way, bringing something new. This paradox generated courage and irregularity in decisions, which is nearly always based on contrasts, becoming one of the most specific artistic principles of Art Nouveau. The jewelry world of Art Nouveau is one of the most sensitive touchstones, demonstrating all particular tendencies of the epoch's fashion. The works of researchers often contain a statement that modern unlike the previous epochs has given the jeweler a new status of an artist and not a craftsman, creating a unique piece of art and not a mass-market product<sup>7</sup>. This statement also holds a part of a paradox, it is quite questionable. On the one hand modern certainly brings novelty and freshness, where each work became an outstanding revelation, based on style preferences of the

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<sup>7</sup> T. Zabozyayeva, *Tsars and artistes. Jewelry gifts* (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskiy modnyy bazar, 2008), 21.

master's personality. However one has to agree, that up to this time the jewelry art was holding on craftsmen, and only now the jeweler gets the status of an artist, at the end of the XIX, the beginning of the XX century. And what with those, whose masterpieces still decorate the treasuries of many countries of the world? After all even one of the creators of the jewelry fashion of Art Nouveau, René Lalique, received a flattering nickname of the "French Cellini", and maestro Benvenuto could not complain about the missing respect towards him as a master. Certainly for example the medieval period in the history of jewelry art has practically preserved no names, but this applied not only to jewelers, the prevailing anonymity of art of that time is quite explainable. But yet Renaissance gradually changes the status of the master, and the diamond age, the XVIII century increases this process, we know many names of wonderful masters. And it is definitely not true, that the works of the jewelry art from these periods are conventional, similar and produced in masses. Even from the technical view it is incorrect. At the contrary, the jewelry world of Art Nouveau is closer to the point of producing for the mass-market, first of all thanks to a more active introduction of new materials and technologies, allowing to reduce the price of the product. But aside from the masses during the period of the priority of modern, on the turn of the XIX and XX centuries, stand unique pieces of art, not fitting into the general framework. They alone preset the nature of the style, falling away from its general typical references.

The French jewelry art at the boundary of the XIX and XX centuries has received its main distinctive nature already in the 1870's. Although the artists of that time were mainly fascinated with the Eastern culture and Japan motives in particular, which is demonstrated in many aspects, nevertheless an enthusiasm for own traditions is present, there are also medieval reminiscences, affinity for Renaissance and moreover for mannerism practices. And all of these is synthesized in a very fanciful manner, becoming visible first of all in the selection of motives and the appreciation of ornaments. Modern is an epoch of dominating ornamental trends, where are combined all value-based milestones of this period. Since 1878, when on the World Fair the French were enchanted with Japan graphics for the first time, the wave of the obsession with Japan became inevitable for the jewelry art, orientalism appeared as in dominating motives, as well as in coloristics. Art Nouveau, even the earlier one, was characterized by the enthusiasm for floral motives, the passion for flowers and plants from common up to the most exotic, which resulted in the creation of many very fine works of jewelry art. And if for example the Russian modern is characterized by more trivial motives, simple field flowers, berries, wheat heads, which from the masters of the Fabergé or Perkhin level created masterpieces of world class thanks to their highest degree of skill, then the French artists were more affected by exotic plants, like orchids or golden daisies. The same principle preserves in the passion for images of animate creatures, which appeared quite often in jewelry of that time. If in the Russian modern prevail images of hens, roosters or even piglets and pigs, sometimes there appear elephants, bears etc., which was specific for the stone-cutting art in the beginning of the XX century (as an example there could be named the works of the Fabergé house again), then the French jewelry is drawn to images of for example snakes, although there were also more attractive motives, as the dragonfly, which could be the symbol of the French Art Nouveau itself. Exactly these images explain that unbelievable level of plasticity, delicacy of rhythmic, which is specific for most of the works in the Art Nouveau style. And this brings us back to the mannerism reminiscences once again, there is an artificiality of the rhythm, exaltation, *linea serpentinata*, which became one of the favorite methods of the masters, and during the time getting more complicated and amended by a stripe. If for example the Russian modern reposes on the tendency of dominating national motives, being quite conservative and more close to classic traditions of the previous epoch, as well as more practical (there are more often specific expressions of style in everyday objects), then the French jewelry Art Nouveau

is exotic, dynamic, synthetic, diverse and most of all declared itself in personal jewelry, for hands, for the head, for the costume. A separate wave, overwhelming the jewelry world, was the fascination with landscape motives, which often appeared in jewelry pieces of art on the turn of the centuries, most of the time amended with ornamental inclusions. Another favorite motive is the feminine image, plastic, languorous, exquisite, eroticized and sensual. The rhythmic of these images is exaggerative, exalted, passionate and musical. There are as female heads, as well as figures of nymphs, dryads etc., whereas they might be as an ode of nudity, incredibly plastic and tender, as well as demonstrate the plastics of multiple drapery cascades. Thus the erasing of borders between kinds of art and their transfusion becomes visible even in jewelry, a brooch, a pendant or a corsage jewelry might have aspects of a graphic painting, decorative panel etc., presenting a whole narrative composition, supplemented by ornamental inclusions, which was often peculiar to “bijoux de peintres”. The enthusiasm for Japan motives is complemented with Egypt motives, after all the affection of the world for mysteries of the Ancient Egypt culture has started in France after the Egyptian campaign of Napoleon Bonaparte. And the excavations of Howard Carter have only intensified this affinity, but this will happen later.

However aside from the floral direction of Art Nouveau, its enthusiasm for floral ornament, plastics of rhythm and linear magnificence, there was also an attraction towards geometrization as a separate wave within the style, it was generated by gothic, medieval reminiscences and did not become a specific property of Art Nouveau, although being sensibly for quite a long time. In other national variants of modern, as for example in Scandinavian, there are often chopped forms, more sharp motives tending to geometrization, however the French Art Nouveau was preferring the plastics of the floral ornament, the exquisiteness of more smooth lines and their most complicated combinations, knots, wrappings, enriched with figures or heads of nymphs with streaming curls, dragonflies, snakes, orchids, lilies or irises. Thus one of the paradoxes of modern first of all lies in the fact that the motives, called usually as new and introduced by artists into the jewelry style as an experiment and a new symbol of the jewelry world of the epoch, were often more like qualitative and creative transformations of traditions of previous epochs, from Ancient Egypt and Japan to Italian and French mannerism. The affinity towards floral motives and exotics of zoomorphic motives, the love for creating some jewelry insectariums – from the East, a short-term wave of generalization, enlargement of forms and geometrization – from the Middle Ages, the fascination with the images of nude nymphs, ideal lineaments and proportions – from the Ancient world and Renaissance, exaltation, affectation and complexity, magnificence of hypertrophic forms and multilayers, nervousness and plastics, aspiration to softness and avoidance of sharp edges – from mannerism. It means, the novelty and revolutionary character of Art Nouveau in jewelry art are based mainly on the synthesis of traditions and innovation. And this innovation consists first of all in the usage of absolutely nontypical for earlier periods materials, which has led to the alteration of the palette of the pieces of art, their forms, the general idea of the design, completely changing the spectrum of potential of the masters. If earlier the main materials were precious metals, first of all gold, more rarely silver, or their alloy, as well as gem stone of the first order, then now thanks to the revolutionary implantation of materials, absolutely unacceptable earlier, the spectrum has largely escalated. If the main metals still primarily remain gold and silver, more rarely platinum, which does not exclude also for example bronze, then as embedding there are used semi-precious stones, like opal, bone, horn, glass<sup>8</sup>, an unseen popularity have gained enamel, where René Lalique has gained perfection by reviving their secrets. And new materials generate many new forms.

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<sup>8</sup> A. Moskvin, *Jewels of the world* (Moscow: AST, Astrel', Yermak, 2003), 148

One of the new features, which is often present in the works of Art Nouveau, has become asymmetry, underlining the original nature and irregularity of compositions. However one can still observe the devotion towards traditions of previous epochs, whereby it is interesting that this is quite often combined in one particular piece of art. For example a silver brooch in form of a pair of swans with enamel, a golden landscape pendant with opal glass and enamel – these are the works of René Lalique (both from 1900), which are typical examples of the Art Nouveau style, as regarding the compositional decision, as well as regarding the motives and materials, and amended with pearl eardrops. An analogous eardrop, but an amethyst one, decorated the golden pendant of Henri and Paul Vever with a feminine head in the center (1900); the same pearl eardrop could be found in the golden brooch of Georges Fouquet with the flower of carnation and in the golden brooch with peacocks (both 1900). It is interesting that a vast amount of significant jewelry was created in 1900, a meaningful period for style formation, this is the date of the World Fair in Paris, where the jewelers created a sensation and which from began the new page of the history of French jewelry. The use of eardrops, often from pearls, became one of the exquisite features of Art Nouveau, peculiar for brooches, pendants, corsage jewelry, for everything peculiar in the XVI century, when they actively came into the jewelry fashion. It means, that entails once again Renaissance and mannerism reminiscences in exceptionally new transformations, but this time within the context of materials, but not the one of the motives for decorations and artistic decisions.

And one of the main features, which appeared now in jewelry art, is a largely expanded circle of customers for pieces of art, which became possible thanks to the extension of the spectrum of used materials. This enlarged not only the palette and form spectrum, but also the circle of customers of the art product brought by masters. The use of semi-precious and decorative embeddings has cheapened the cost of the product, making it more accessible and therefore possible to be acquired by a larger amount of people. The jewelry art was always special-ordered, the nature of the product depended on the taste and will of the customer. And the jewelry has always presaged the status of its owner, serving as an indicator of his financial state. But from now this factor became more indistinct. But it should not be perceived as an all-round and indisputable factor, there is only a dissociation of the categories “joaillerie” and “bijouterie”, but the mastery of the pioneers of Art Nouveau made the pieces of art from the second category true masterpieces, not less admirable than classic jewelry pieces from precious metals and stones, still used for more prosperous customers. Modern is very fugitive, it was designated only for circa two decades<sup>9</sup>, maybe that is why it flow in one breath, the masters were as though hurrying to express everything they wanted. In this period worked the brothers Vever, Lucien Gaillard, Eugene Feuillarte, Jules Destape, Paul Grande, Honoré Bourdonclc, Charles Béranger, Louis Aucoc, Lucien Falize, the house of Fouquet was already operating, lead by Alphonse Fouquet, but the real trend setters of jewelry fashion of Art Nouveau have become Georges Fouquet, taking the reins of the house after the death of his father, and René Lalique. However this names became famous and transformed into icons of the jewelry French modern most of all thanks to Sarah Bernhardt, which has driven to them the attention of the society.

Among the customers, which could afford expensive unique jewelry, there are more and more not only crowned nobles and people of nobility, and with time just prosperous people of different classes (for example the Russian merchants could afford themselves even goods from the Fabergé house), but also the artistic elite, the Bohemia.

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<sup>9</sup> T. Zabozyayeva, Tsars and artistes. Jewelry gifts (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskiy modnyy bazar, 2008), 21

And this is explained not only by the mentioned extension of the price range of jewelry items, but also the alteration of the role and significance of actresses, ballet dancers, singers, among which on the turn of the centuries have been many owners of jewelry marvels, becoming now legendary historical jewelry. The transformation of their social status enabled the possibility of ordering jewelry by leading jewelers of the epoch. And it depended not on large income, paid to the crowd pullers for their performances, which made them potential customers of jewelers, but particularly due to the changed place in the society. Of course this happened not instantly and in the progressive French society even quicker than for example in the conservative Russian one, where a famous ballet dancer could swim in luxury, but did not claim the role of the wife from a noble of high society, and this wall remained for quite a long time. There were some exceptions, but they were very few. The French society was already more progressive and democratic by this time, which allowed the crowd pullers to find themselves among the most prosperous people of France. Sometimes the blurring of boundaries took place inverted, already in the period of post-impressionism the French theatre and ballet community has often seen in its coulairs the count Henri Marie Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec-Monfa, the patron of the Paris bottom, inspired by the life of the demi-monde and as if becoming the live illustration to the novel of Gautier "Captain Fracasse" in two centuries. But the role of actresses and ballet dancers become more significant, their talent was highly appreciated, and some of them changed the course of the history. These years dances Isadora Duncan, who infatuated Sergei Yesenin, Mathilda Kschessinskaya, who managed to become the muse for several representatives of the House of Romanovs at once and in the end the wife of one of them, Anna Pavlova is shining in the ballet world, the dancer Cléo de Méreode captivates Paris, the world-known dancer Margaretha Geertruida Zelle, more famous with the stage name Mata Hari intrudes in the course of the history of several countries at once. One of these persons became the legendary actress, possessing the inclination towards experiments, new decisions, sometimes even scandalous and nontypical, which name stands in a line of creators of the new theatre of Europe, Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923). Her play was mainly hinged on the negation of the classic manner and traditions, she could play Juliette being already seventy years old, she could transform into a young man in her fifties, she could be Hamlet, Ophelia, Tosca and Theodora, classic and avant-garde were synthesized in her manner<sup>10</sup>. And the approach to the creation of the image was also unusual. The audience was worshipping Sarah, she was showered with presents. Her extravagance spread onto the stage image, as well as her image in everyday living, gradually the difference practically vanished. Affected by luxury, loving everything exceptional, the actress transferred these preferences as to her home environment, as well as to the stage. And one of the main aspects of her stage image were accessories, the jewelry items. Modern excellently corresponded to the needs of the actress, prone to experiments and untypical decisions. The uniqueness of the lifestyle, preferences and inclinations found expression even in everyday living, Sarah Bernhardt could bring from a journey a cheetah (which she held on a golden chain, made by one jeweler), chameleons in a box and wolf dogs<sup>11</sup>. There were two turtles living in her house, one of those had the shell decorated with gold and topazes of three different colors; even today she would easily earn the title "Madame Epatage". One could sense provocation in her actions and this provocation could be perfectly translated into the language of the jewelry art in the Art Nouveau style, the jewelry of this style were also provoking traditions with their non-standard materials, combination of classics and avant-garde and unusual forms, demanding courage from their owners.

<sup>10</sup> S. Bernar, *My double life* (Moscow: Flyuid, 2006), 2

<sup>11</sup> S. Bernar, *My double life...* 192

That is why it may be said, that Sarah Bernhardt and Art Nouveau were created for each other, moreover, to a great extent they created each other being demiurges for one of another. Art Nouveau perfectly reflected the character and preferences of Madame Bernhardt, from the forms to the motives of decoration on the pieces of art. After all the ideas for most of her jewelry, becoming the essential part of the costume, stage image and afterwards her image in everyday living belong to Sarah. She had a very large amount of jewelry, the actress was surrounded by luxury and beauty, the jewelry is the attribute of status, prosperity and in this particular case even favour, which totally corresponded with the presence of an enormous amount of jewelry owned by Sarah Bernhardt. There is also a story about her jewelry that became the object of admiration for ladies of the whole city, exhibited in the windows of the shop in Saint-Louis<sup>12</sup>. But one could dispute her attitude towards jewelry items. Despite of being an owner of a small fortune, rumors suggested she would sleep with a pistol under her pillow, in order to protect her treasures. According to speculations Sarah loved jewelry, still the memoirs of the empress mention that she had quite a few jewelry<sup>13</sup>. Though during time the situation changed drastically and soon the actress writes that she has more than enough jewelry, also mentioning that they were worth more than million francs<sup>14</sup>. The fame of Sarah Bernhardt was a wonderful bridge to the world of the upperclass society, a way to increase income. Her name was used not once for this purpose and the jewelers were not excluded. The history of the exhibition of jewelry from Sarah Bernhardt in Saint-Louis quickly became part of the public domain, it is quite illustrative by demonstrating clearly how the name of the actress was used by the jeweler for advertising purposes. But if in this case a regular jeweler could only earn something on the name of the actress, than in two other cases the exchange was equal worth, the actress opened the doors for young artists, helping them to enter the circle of customers of the high society and giving possibilities for their talents. In return they created her image as if they would frame her extravagance into a proper cover making her stage image inimitable.

Her jewelry achieved prominence, which led to a robbery, once the actress was robbed all of her jewelry, which she had with her in a train carriage. About a number of jewelry Sarah also mentions inside her memoirs. Some of the jewelry she preserved especially to remember the worshipers of her talent, which became particularly important to her. During her quite a long life the actress had a lot of jewelry and not all she could preserve, although her habit to sleep with a pistol under her pillow became a legend. Something perished in fire, something was lost, something was stolen. But there were only several pieces, the loss of which Bernhardt was remembering with sadness and pity. Among them was a golden bracelet presented by Napoleon III and a golden diadem with diamonds and pearls, a present from Halil Bey. Both of these jewelry perished in fire in the house of the actress, transformed into shapeless ingots. The owner preserved these golden ingots until the end of her days, she has found in the remnants of the melted metal the diamonds, whereas the pearls were of course destroyed. The actress also could not keep for eternity the appreciated gift of Victor Hugo, a bracelet chain with a diamond eardrop, which the author called a teardrop burst from his eyes after seeing Sarah playing on stage, the actress lost the jewelry. Other gifts include a magnificent pearl necklace, which was presented to Madame Bernhardt in Chicago, an amethyst brooch with pearls, presented by an admiring girl at the day when the Lady with the Camellias was played, an honorable order with

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<sup>12</sup> S. Bernar, My double life... 236-237.

<sup>13</sup> S. Bernar, My double life... 94.

<sup>14</sup> S. Bernar, My double life... 236.

diamonds, handed by the king of Denmark in 1880<sup>15</sup> and many others. It is interesting, that even if all of these various jewelry, presented to the actress and therefore selected FOR HER, but not BY HER, were quite diverse and closer to traditional forms and materials, then that jewelry, which was created explicitly with the participation in the idea of its future owner, at her request or for her stage image and as part of her costume, it was exceptionally stylistically different, characteristic and individual and could have only Madame Sarah as its owner.

### **The tandem of Sarah Bernhardt, Alphonse Mucha and George Fouquet: co-creation in the jewelry world**

About the role of jewelry in the creation of the stage image of Sarah Bernhardt has written even Chekhov, affirming that Bernhardt was using extraordinary jewelry as an instrument for achieving her goal, in order to outrage, to blind, to shock the public. One of the unique tandems, favoring the actress to reach this goal and for the jeweler favoring his blistering career growth, was the tandem with George Fouquet (1862-1957). For creating posters to the spectacles of Sarah Bernhardt was invited the Czech designer Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939). Exactly these posters nudged to the intention of incarnating in precious materials the fantasies of the artist. The whole Paris was covered since 1893 with the posters of Mucha, which became a kind of a manifest of modern in graphic design. The first poster was made for the spectacle "Gismonda". From this moment the capital was raving by facing every new poster with jubilation. In 1894 the actress acquainted the young artist, who has received thanks to her patronage a position in the theatre "Renaissance" owned by Sarah, to the jeweler George Fouquet. And the posters provoked Fouquet to offer Alphonse Mucha cooperation, in 1898 the jeweler has seen the poster to the spectacle "Medea". The productive tandem of the designer and jeweler existed from 1899 to 1901, during this time the jewelry was created, which became the symbols of Art Nouveau. The most famous were created for Sarah Bernhardt. Although there are references about continuing cooperation of Mucha and Fouquet until 1923, but the fruitful actual tandem remained only for three years. Alphonse Mucha, as designer, furniture master and graphic artist was required in Paris and Fouquet has accurately identified his talent of a jeweler. Jewelry created for Sarah Bernhardt which she wore on stage and often shined in high society became her signature, the reputation forming element in life and the instrument for creating her image on stage. In turn she became the muse and inspirer of two masters and not only a customer, Sarah could be legitimately called the co-author, because she was not only the user of the finished goods, but also participated with her ideas in their creation. The main thing what distinguished Bernhardt as the customer of jewelers was the lack of fear, as well moral and ethic boundaries, she was not afraid to wear jewelry of the Art Nouveau style, which was feasible not for every society woman. The pieces of art created by Mucha and Fouquet were quite ambitious, massive, large in size, sometimes heavy and often aggressive as in form, as well as in decorating motives, very few fashionable prudes would dare to wear something like that. One should have known how to wear it and Sarah Bernhardt has truly possessed this talent. If she was acting like a living advertisement for jewelers, increasing the demand on their creations and bolstering their cost, so they have perfectly complemented her images, precisely feeling the character and style. Significant jewelry, which were part of the stage image and loved by Sarah in real life, became the symbols of style in jewelry art. A part of the jewelry of Sarah Bernhardt, which afterwards turned to an essential component of her stage image, could be seen in the album "Decorative documents" issued in 1902 by A.

<sup>15</sup> S. Bernar, My double life... 206.

Mucha. Apart from sketches of tableware, pitchers, cups, forks, decanters, knives etc., interiors, furniture, carried out with a pencil and a shading color of white, there were also many sketches of jewelry items, such as hair picks, pendants, brooches, rings, necklaces, chains, bracelets, pins. The main motives of jewelry were floral, the beloved by Mucha irises, lilies, ivy, twisted into the refined florid ornamental compositions, complicated by rhythmic and very musical in plastics.

One of the most distinctive was the famous bracelet created according to the sketch of Alphonse Mucha by George Fouquet for the spectacle "Medea". From there exactly began the history of the tandem, when Fouquet was amazed by the poster he had seen. On the poster there was a snake standing out of the picture, which winded around the arm of Medea, who the perspicacious Fouquet decided to transfer into precious metals. There is also a reference that the idea to convert the ornament from the poster into a real jewelry came from the actress. The created bracelet was to Sarah Bernhardt's taste and she wore it as in life, as well as during the performances of "Medea" and "Cleopatra", that is why it is sometimes called the "Medea" bracelet or the "Cleopatra" bracelet. But it is more known under the name of "Rose hand" (1899, gold, enamel, opals, rubies, diamonds; the city museum of Sakai, Japan). The image of Sarah gradually turned integral with the image of the bracelet, they became one, the jewelry received not only a history, but also a face, so in this particular case we may not speak about *the history* of jewelry, but about its *biography*. The jewelry exceptionally transferred the nature of the image and was hold in the stylistics of Art Nouveau. The design, the form, the materials, the way of wearing the bracelet, everything was unusual. The construction of the bracelet was assuming two parts, the bracelet itself and a ring worn on the pointer finger, connected with each other with a chain. The jewelry was made from gold in form of two snakes, one of which winds around an arm in circles, ending with a curve of a tail above the wrist, and the head of the other one crowns the finger in form of a ring. The jewelry is massive, brindled in coloristics, ornamental by nature, as the decorativeness is enhanced with cloisonne enamel, but the color emphasis is made on the heads of the snakes, decorated with opals. Opal, one of the favorite stones of modern is an embedding that perfectly suits this jewelry composition. This mineral has a particular mystical luminescence, the noble opal gleams with several colors at once and has a facture of a sparkling semi-transparent water. That is why this stone suited perfectly to the emitting mysteriousness Sarah, thanks to the motive of the serpent, the aggressiveness of the form and the polychromic enamel, the golden jewelry has superbly fitted into the image of the bloody Medea, being one of its co-creators, which completely corresponded to the picture of the menacing magic of Cleopatra. The jewelry was furnished with a joint system, giving mobility and not bothered the actress on stage by hindering movements, it only increased by its aggressive form and mystique glimmering the dramatic nature of the whole image.

The fame of Sarah's bracelet was accompanied with one of the most famous brooches, created with the fantasy of Mucha and Fouquet, the iconic "Orchid" (1900, Anderson collection, Great Britain). 1900 has presented the world a number of unique jewelry, the year of the World Fair in Paris, where the jewelers gained acceptance and prominence, which became critical for their careers. For the creation of the jewelry flower were used gold, mother of pearl, rubies, enamel and pearls. The orchid motive was taken by the jeweler more than once, but significant became exactly this brooch. Its style enriched by the fantasy of the master and spectator gains almost a zoomorphic nature, by the form the brooch looks more like a fantastic sea creature, which is enhanced by the use of the mother of pearl in the lower part of the jewelry.



The fantastic form enables to see many images, which only benefits the creation of the stage image, especially in the epoch of the Middle Ages or Renaissance, which for it was made. The perception of the image, created by this form could be compared with the way how the spectator conceived anamorphosis of the mannerism epoch, so loved in XVI. This resonation of epochs supports the fantasy nature of the general form, as well as the use of the mother of pearl (the nautilus shells were very popular in the mannerism jewelry, especially for the creation of goblets with a bizarre form), and the presence of Keshi pearls, used as closure of peculiar stamen bordering the ruby core of the flower.

The same year is also made the corsage jewelry form a private collection, created by the tandem of A. Mucha and G. Fouquet by the order of Sarah, by using bone, gold, turquoise, opals, pearls and enamel. It has quite a complicated and interesting design, it may be called exotic at a stretch, because those graphic motives were used by masters quite often, as well as the compositional scheme of the item. On a narrow horizontal plate is mounted a kind of a mascarón with a female face, twined with a florid knot of serpent-formed hair, on each side there are pending elements on chains with semiprecious stones of different colors, and the centre of the composition in its lower case became a pendant with an image of a female figure. Such a composition scheme with a central element flanked by pendants was loved by Alphonse Fouquet, the father of the famous co-author of Alphonse Mucha, George Fouquet. It could be seen for example in the "Chain of Bianca Capello" (around 1878), as well as in a number of other jewelry. It is a little verbosely for Art Nouveau, with a shade of Baroque complexity in the composition scheme, mannerism rhythmic of elements, slightly fractional for the modern, inclined to enlargement and specific unwieldiness of forms. The hanging central pendant contains an image of a female figure, modified multiply by Mucha also in other jewelry and migrated from posters, dedicated to spectacles of Sarah Bernhardt. The jewelry is a little eclectic not only because of its composition similarity with the items of a slightly earlier period preceding Art Nouveau, but also thanks to the fact that there are synthesized graphic motives of different nature, where are combined the symbolism of several periods at once and features of different styles. Here are also connected Baroque composition features, pre-modern in forming jewelry, the tendency to floral compositions and fanciful rhythmic, which is peculiar for mannerist items, the almost Versailles sunny image of the upper part of the jewelry stands in contrast with the graphic planar, poster image of the lower pendant. The clearly seen cross of the general composition of the jewelry conjoins with the Antique nudity of an exquisite figure of the lower pendant, aquarel by its nature. The main semantic and compositional knot of the jewelry is practically the resemblance of the central part to Aegides Athena, the beautiful image of the Gorgon, which symmetric royal Versaille-style tranquility is set against the wild passionate rhythmic of the streaming serpent streaks, edging the face. The same motive repeats in the lower pendant, but in the planar image.

As strange and even bizarre was perceived the corsage jewelry, created in 1902 by the sketches of Alphonse Mucha and under direct involvement in elaborating the design of Sarah Bernhardt herself, the "Winged serpent" (the "Winged dragon"). The jewelry corresponds with all inquiries of modern, it is of a flaring form, asymmetric in particular elements by perceiving the general balance of the composition, quite large and massive, sharp and fractured in rhythmic, combining different materials. But it also possesses traditional inclusions of previous historical periods, in particular the remnants of the Renaissance jewelry, this is really a kind of a similarity of epochs: the jewelry has a composition remotely resembling the form of a bow, which was specific for an earlier period. However instead of traditional soft in form and rhythmic ribbons it is built on sharp splinter rhythms, floral motives and the image of a snake, plastic and aggressive simultaneously.

The snake was the base also for the bracelet of Sarah, the fondness of the creators towards this image is easy to explain, this is not only the indication of the wisdom of the owner, similarity with ancient times, but also a very beneficial motive for the jeweler and the designer, used thanks to its rhythmic and plastics. Instead of rings of a traditional ribbon there were stylized sharp wings of a serpent, instead of a knot its golden head. For the creation of the jewelry were used materials, as giving credit to traditions, as well as demonstrating the novelty of the style: gold, diamonds, enamel and pearls. Thus it is interesting that gold, which is traditionally, such as diamonds as well, emphasized by the jewelers of previous epochs, was practically "hidden" under the enamel, by fulfilling only the function of the base and nothing more, the focus is deposited in favor of the polychrome enamel and form of pearls. The pearls of this jewelry also completely correspond with the idea, the Baroque pearls are used, hanging in an eardrop, already loved in the period of Renaissance, as well as Keshi pearls, smaller in size and absolutely asymmetrical.

One of the most specific jewelry, which created the image of Sarah on stage, were constantly present on the posters of A. Mucha and became essential for the image of the actress, was the tiara or diadem. The jewelry not especially typical for the daily live, too pretentious and bulky for it in the perception of a common man, but firmly ingrained as a segment of the image of the actress.

### **The cooperation of Sarah Bernhardt and René Lalique**

The most significant jewelry for the head, first of all the diadems were created (often according to sketches of A. Mucha again) by another jeweler, which precisely hit with his artistic language the tone of the strings of Sarah Bernhardt, René Lalique (1860-1945). There are still debates which of the two jewelers surpassed the other and with who the tandem of Sarah was more fruitful, with Fouquet or Lalique. The stylistics of the items of both masters was mainly compatible, the authorship of some jewelry was even attributed to both. But there are also references that Fouquet sometimes adopted the stylistic findings of Lalique (Miller), supposedly driven him away from the royal actress and little by little outshining him. Lalique started his cooperation with Bernhardt in 1890 and thanks to her got acquainted with a patron of Armenian origin Calouste Gulbenkian, the cooperation with whom lasted for many years and in which collection, in the museum of Lisbon, there is one of the biggest and most successful collection of his works, around one and a half hundreds<sup>16</sup>. The collector acquired the works of Lalique more than thirty years, until the end of 1920<sup>17</sup>. His large, provocative, with aggressive forms jewelry have perfectly complemented the image of the outrageous actress. Lalique was already an established master, when he got acquainted with Sarah, but this acquaintance, as for Mucha and Fouquet became for him monumental. 1890 was lightened for him by the star of the godlike Sarah. Lalique created for Bernhardt bulky, florid in design bracelets, rings, diadems, corsage jewelry. And with his jewelry she entered the scene in her most famous spectacles. Some of the legendary jewelry only hypothetically are connected with Sarah. As an example serve the pendant "Female face" from the collection of Gulbenkian, dated around 1897-98 (gold, enamel, ivory, diamonds, sapphires). The centre of the composition became the female face with closed eyes, which is considered the portrait image of Sarah Bernhardt. Once again it is the embodiment of contrast, a tender languid female face is opposed to the horror of the image of a monster, in the open chaps of the Chimera, located above the female white face is

<sup>16</sup> B. Nikiforov & V. Chernova, *Jewelry* (Rostov n/D.: Feniks, 2006), 129

<sup>17</sup> L. Passos & M. Fernanda, *René Lalique at the Calouste Gulbekian Museum* (Milan: Skira / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2008)

glowing a big deep blue sapphire. Lalique is an excellent composer, the delicate symmetry of the floral ornament collocates with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic inclusions, creating in the fantasy of the spectator a kind of a superb chaos, whereas the pendant is absolutely symmetrical according to the compositional idea. There are contradictions in everything, the beauty is set against ugliness, the harmony and regularity of symmetry against chaos, light spots against dark outlines. With the whole uneventfulness of the composition, heading towards the pyramidal, i.e. the most stable form, the general impression from the piece of art is freedom, movement, instability and fluidity thanks to the bursts of rhythmic. An enormous meaning is designated to the gaps in the form, they give the jewelry the lightness of a breath. The cold palette shades the sleep of the female head, the cold tones of the green enamel harmonically complete the depth of the azure sapphires.

During the creation of a number of items the tandem “Bernhardt-Lalique” was supplemented by Alphonse Mucha, responsible for the design. This was specific for the famous diadem “Princess Lontaine” (the museum of the Theatre Opera, Paris), also becoming one of the signatures of the actress, she posed with it for photos, shined on the stage. Diadem crowns from different flowers are a typical detail for the design of Mucha's posters. One of them, made on the occasion of an event in honor of Sarah, held in Paris 1896, depicts her image with an exotic diadem crown from live white lilies. Shortly after Lalique incarnates the floral fantasies of Mucha in material, in the spectacle by the drama of E. Rostand “Princess Lontaine” Sarah Bernhardt entered the stage in the role of Melisende with a pearl tiara on the shock of her hair. Lilies on the thrown up head from the poster were so liked, that the graphic ideas of Mucha were incorporated in the scattering of pearls on metal. The tiara is large in size, quite bulky, heavy, but Sarah increased this shocking impression from the image, wearing together with it a lot not less bulky rings covering all fingers. The tiara is complemented with semi-precious colorful embeddings, but the main focus is made on pearls, which perfectly transferred the whiteness of lilies. For this image there was also made a pendant with an eardrop from the New York collection. The pendant is dated 1898-99, is asymmetric in composition, narrative – a female figure with a fallow deer are located alongside trees, the composition is edged with an ornamental frame and fitted with an amethyst eardrop. The gold is collocated with enamel and diamonds.

Another image was coming from the covered with gold plating bronze pendant “Princess Lontaine” with semi-precious amendments by the sketch of Mucha, but carried out by A. Truffier (1900, Royal museum of fine arts of Belgium, Brussels), it is almost sculptural opposed to the planar pendant of Lalique.

Not less pretentious, provocatively massive, almost architectural and conceived by Lalique was the headwear for the spectacle “Theodora”, where Sarah Bernhardt personified the image of an empress. Here the master could not restrain his aspiration to royal magnificence and flaring majesty, achieved by the language of precious accessories. The sketches of headwear to the play of Sardou promise a superb incarnation of the image. The diadems with crotaphic pendants frame the face, maximal corresponding with the ideas of the authors of images (the master and the actress) regarding the spirit of the epoch. One of such headwear is build on a knot of snakes, the motive used by Lalique not once. The image of the snake was often accompanying Sarah Bernhardt, although most clearly it was evident in the bracelet “Rose hand”. The snake (asp) was crowning the head of the actress in the spectacle “Cleopatra”, for which also Lalique was creating accessories. Here the master went further, on the sketch the shock of hair of a female head is crowned with a whole knot of angry hissing snakes, slightly smoothed by the waterfall of pearl strings.

Exactly this way with a cascade of entwined into a live knot hissing snakes with open chaps, wherefrom pearl strings flew, Lalique impersonated in precious materials the pectoral, which now is being kept in the museum of Gulbenkian (1898-99, gold, enamel). The author was restrained in materials this time, except of enamel, the gold is not enriched with anything, he avoided to use precious embeddings, putting emphasis on the decorative features of enamel. The golden base, as in the overwhelming majority of jewelry from Lalique, is almost concealed with layers of enamel, which distinguishes the stylistics of Lalique from for example the artistic language of George Fouquet, who was quite actively using the color and fracture variety of the surface of gold, often not covering it not with enamel, not with decorative embeddings, but enriching it for example with engraving. The snake was hissing, alerting about its streak, Sarah was affronting the spectator, habituating him to something new and extraordinary, by educating and taming, as if she was once again provoking the audience accustomed to academic principles. In response to the shining in the eyes of common men exclamations: "C'est impossible, c'est terrible. This is not done, this never happened!" she was retorting with all of her image, with each accessory: "And now it will be like this! Now this is HOW it is done!"

Among the jewelry items of Lalique in the collection of Sarah Bernhardt were also brooches. Different composition schemes, from horizontal oriented as for example the Paris brooch with scarabs (1890, gold, diamonds, chrysoprases) up to strictly vertical directed. With the name of Sarah Bernhardt is also connected the notorious miracle of the Fair 1900, the corsage brooch "Dragonfly-woman" (1897-98, gold, enamel, chrysoprase, chalcedony, moonstone, diamonds; the museum of Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon). On this festival of art the corsage jewelry of Lalique created a furore. The brooch due to its large size (23 cm high and 26.5 cm wide) demanding special conditions for being able to wear it, was equipped with a joint system, which made it flexible. The flexibility was also needed because this was a corsage jewelry, i.e. was located on a surface with relief. Such a scheme was already seen in jewelry of Sarah, the bracelet "Medea" ("Rose hand") was also equipped with the same system, making it elastic by preserving its external massive nature. This jewelry became one of the embodiments of modern. A light elegance and aggressiveness, beauty and ugliness, incredible plastic and fairness of rhythm, set against predatism, all of these contradictions are contained just in one item. The work is polychromic, the colors of precious and semi-precious stones are complemented with the palette of enamel. It is interesting, that the "Dragonfly-woman", as most of jewelry works of Lalique is quite cold in coloristics, the master preferred blue and green colors in their absolute variety of tones. That is why his jewelry in sea style is so natural, as well as his zoological and anthropomorphic fantasies, floral ornaments. The fiery warm images are not peculiar to Lalique, more often his jewelry is aristocratically restrained in the palette.

## Conclusion

Most of posters created by Alphonse Mucha for Sarah Bernhardt contained jewelry, which impressed Sarah. Many motives from the posters travelled afterwards into the jewelry works of Lalique or Fouquet. But their further impersonation in materials often differed from the original idea. After all except the perceptions of the actress how should look like a brooch, a diadem or a ring, transferring the spirit of the Middle Ages, there were also convictions of the artist and jeweler regarding the fact to what extent it will be technological and moreover how it will affect the spectator. And the perception of the spectator could be successful only in case of quite big sized jewelry, because they were perceived on the actress from a long distance, separating the audience from the stage.

Thus the jeweler and the designer were in the state of an artist or a sculptor, for a successful perception of their works was needed a specific distance. But if in case with a picture or a sculpture the increasing distance between the spectator and the work of art only improves the successful perception, then for the jewelry the effect is opposite, the bigger the distance, the more hurtful it is for the perception, the remoteness from the piece of art is destroying the image in the eyes of the spectator. That is why the bulkiness of Sarah's jewelry, created for spectacles, was not only a stylistic feature of Art Nouveau, but also a forced measure, as well large forms and the lack of separate elements. The image of Sarah Bernhardt as an essence of the genius of an actress, the extravagancy of a woman and the uniqueness of a human was so naturally amended by the jewelry in the Art Nouveau style, that many of those attributed to her actually had nothing to do with the actress, the rumors overinterpreted the image, adding details that supposedly should be suitable. As an example may serve one of the most famous jewelry of modern, the magnificent opal necklace from René Lalique, which is occasionally attributed to Sarah Bernhardt, but in fact was created for the wife of the master. This obsessional idea of the synthesis of two images has its logic, the fantasy of the spectator insistently wishes to see the most interesting and worthy perpetuations connected in one, as a symbol of the acting talent and the jewelry excellence, they were destined to walk together in the perception of the spectator. Sarah Bernhardt incorporated the ideas of ideal acting, the jewelry of Fouquet and Lalique incorporated the apprehension of a unique jewelry masterpiece, which induced to synthesize these images into one, even quite natural. Could Sarah Bernhardt have been the co-author of the jewelers during the creation of jewelry? Certainly. As actively by participating in the elaboration of design, which is understandable, considering that Madame Bernhardt was a talented sculptor, as well as passively as a customer and inspirator, for which she is often called the Muse of the famous jewelers. But at the same time the jewelers were co-authors of the stage image created by Sarah Bernhardt, it is inherent from the jewelry wonders, with which the actress amended her unusual costumes. The jewelry allowed to shape the image brighter, to make it shine, to transfer the spirit of the epoch. But one should remember that Sarah renowned for being the owner of many expensive unique jewelry did not set her possession of jewelry as a goal in itself, she made them to an instrument for her image creation and development, they helped her to create herself. The actress appreciates the image, generated by the jewelry, the colors which were born in the fantasy of the spectator, its design and idea, but the expensiveness of materials stayed in the background. And despite of the well-known love of Sarah to diamonds, she had many items in her collection, where no precious stones of the first order dominated. After all modern is characterized by experiments with the synthesis of earlier incongruous materials, often with the priority of not the most expensive, the value of precious stones and metals was sacrificed in favor of the colors of image, which was sometimes easier to achieve by means of glass or bone. Modern is a challenge and contrast. And in jewelry this is more distinctive than in other kinds of art, it is more characteristic. That is why for example for Mathilda Kschessinskaya, also famous for her adoration of jewelry at top of mind was the shine of stones and the luxury created by them, and for Sarah the image generated by the jewelry. With all the magnificence of the art of a ballet dancer the jewelry she possessed could also be owned by another wearer, the one who earned the praise of the power players or just having an appropriate amount of money. But to imagine the jewelry of Sarah Bernhardt on someone else is practically impossible, they were created FOR her, for the SAKE of her and were serving her specifically. That is why the actress could be rightfully fitted into the history of the jewelry art as one of the creators of the jewelry Art Nouveau, and René Lalique, George Fouquet, Alphonse Mucha could be ranked among the affluent personalities and co-authors of the artistic microcosm of France on the turn of the XIX and XX centuries.

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