



An Unusual and Memorable Valuation

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One of the most exciting facets of my profession is that I never know what I am going to see. When I embark on a valuation I usually have a list of the items I am going to appraise, such as: five gem set rings, three diamond necklaces, six bracelets etc... However those three necklaces could include anything from a dramatic 19th century two row festoon, to a delicate Art Nouveau floriate pendant or a dazzling modern diamond single stone collet.

On this particular valuation day there were a number of brooches on the list. Brooches have unfortunately fallen from fashion these days and are not worn as much as they were last century. Therefore many of these beautiful jewellery examples are locked away in safes, or kept concealed in bedside cabinets and only get to see the light of day when being appraised by the likes of me. I actually feel quite privileged to get to see them and hear the owner speak of their history and the long forgotten memories that their reappearance suddenly trigger.

One of the most striking pieces I have seen of late was rather unusual, a rose quartz and diamond brooch crafted in the form of a shrimp. The beautifully carved rose quartz panel curved to form the body and connected to the golden head with dancing tentacles, brilliant cut diamond eyes and textured detail. With gold overlaying the body to form the 'legs' and terminating at the skilfully scalloped tail. It spanned 11cms to give you an idea of size, so certainly would not be missed when worn to adorn a lapel or dress top. I can imagine it would be a real conversation starter at many a soiree.

The makers mark on the brooch was Mauboussin, a French jewellery company who are famous for their Art Deco and Retro pieces. The company dates back to 1827, but it started gaining international recognition and acclaim in the 1920's. It is definitely a brand to look out for, especially at auction and antique shops because, as with many of the great designers, the older pieces tend to be so flamboyant, interesting and unique, compared to the more modern, especially from the Deco and Retro era.

The Mauboussin brand remains strong, with boutiques all over the world. Although it doesn't have a shop in the UK, it would definitely be a store to explore when we are able to travel and go on foreign adventures again.

The second hand replacement value of this shrimp brooch is £6600 and the memory of this valuation will live with me for a long time.



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