



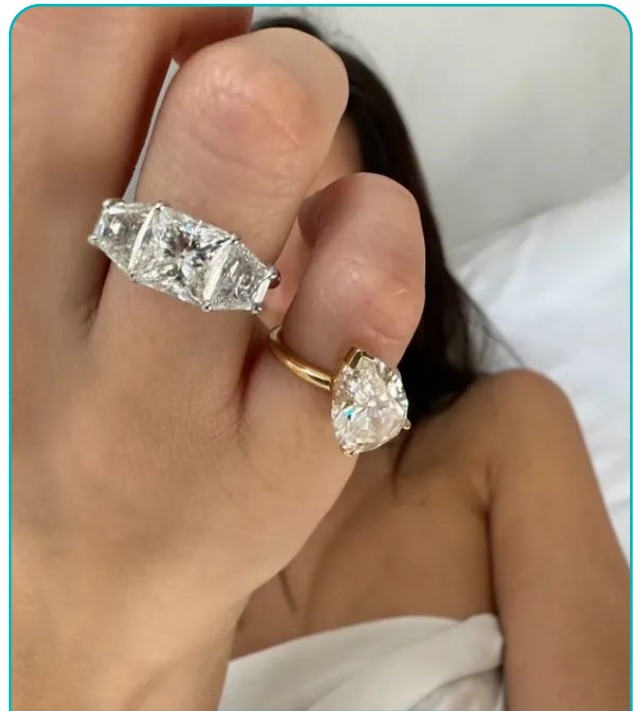
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## THE RISE OF THE 'DIVORCE RING' A NEW PHENOMENON?

A huge jewellery trend of 2024 has been the rise of the 'divorce rings,' propelled into the spotlight by none other than supermodel Emily Ratajkowski. Following her divorce from Sebastian Bear-McClard in 2022, she revealed that she had remodelled her 'toi et moi' diamond engagement ring into two separate rings via an Instagram post in March of 2024. The images of these two rings were simply captioned "divorce rings," signalling and representing a transformation in her jewellery to coincide with the transformation taking place in her life. She explained to Vogue, "The rings represent my own personal evolution... I don't think a woman should be stripped of her diamonds just because she's losing a man."



Emily Ratajkowski's Instagram - redesigned divorce rings



Original engagement ring – pear cut  
and princess cut diamonds

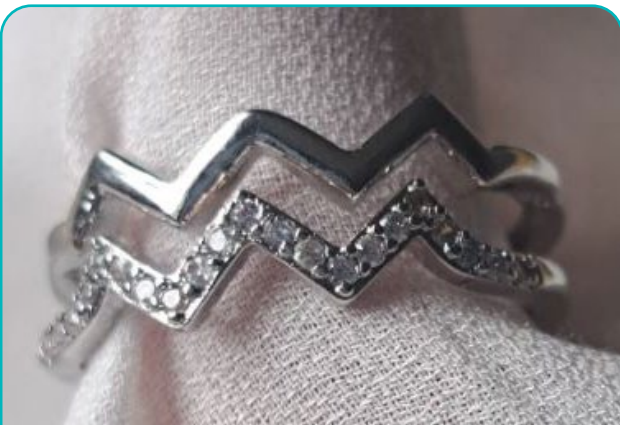
From the original engagement ring, set with pear cut and princess cut diamonds, Emily commissioned designer Alison Lou to create two separate pieces. Firstly, a single stone ring in a yellow gold setting for the pear to be worn on the little finger, and secondly a three stone ring from the princess cut, with additional trapezoid cut diamonds either side in a bi-colour setting. From one original engagement ring, these two complementary dress rings mark a transformational and empowering moment in her life, as she explained to Vogue "Somehow, these rings feel like a reminder that I can make myself happy in ways I never imagined."

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Broken rings symbolise end of a marriage, set with diamonds to represent optimism

Although a seemingly fresh and somewhat viral idea of 2024 thanks to Emrata's Instagram post, the repurposing of sentimental jewellery is nothing new. Throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, wedding bands themselves were altered by jewellers both in America and the United Kingdom to signify a divorce.



Zig zag cut band stands for the highs and lows in life

It was Chicago-born Mrs Marina Parke who purportedly invented the notion of the 'divorce ring' in 1911, when she had her wedding ring from her husband Fred sized down to wear on the little finger of her right hand – she has been quoted to say that as a result “new acquaintances no longer enquire about your husband, and old friends who have not yet heard of the divorce, perceiving the ring, are saved from embarrassing themselves and you by asking awkward questions”.

In the UK, women were recorded as having their wedding bands altered variously – with zigzags cut through, resizing and worn on the little finger. Designs specifically for the little finger followed, including black enamel sections added to former wedding rings, the addition of a broken Cupid's bow, or simply the word 'FREE' inscribed to the inside of the band. Moving into the 1930s, the divorce ring was “quite glamorous, shaped as a circle of diamonds or pearls, interrupted by a coloured gemstone. The breaking of the circle symbolised the severed marriage union.” (The Times).



Serpentine Jewels – Redesigned emerald-cut diamond engagement ring alongside an emerald

The act of repurposing and re-wearing sentimental jewellery in this way does certainly add a degree of autonomy and transformation to a piece. There are of course instances in which remodelling jewellery can decrease value – especially when removed from a designer's setting, altering an antique jewel, or when the heat of the jeweller's torch poses far too much of a risk to the gem material encased within. In any case, it is highly recommended to seek advice from a specialist, and of course up-to-date valuations for any items to guarantee sufficient cover for your jewellery both before and after any alterations are made.

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