

Lifestyle on Saturday

The Apollo & Artemis diamonds at auction

The most valuable earrings ever to appear at auction composed of a fancy vivid blue and a fancy intense pink diamond will be auctioned by Sotheby's on 16 May at the Mandarin Oriental, Geneva. Individually, these captivating diamonds – one Fancy Vivid Blue, one Fancy Intense Pink – are truly exceptional stones and when considered as a pair, they enter a class of their own: the most important earrings ever to appear at auction. Offered separately as individual lots, 'The Apollo Blue' will be presented with an estimate of \$38 – 50 million (CHF 38.1 – 50.2m) and 'The Artemis Pink' is estimated between \$12.5 – 18 million (CHF 12.5 – 18.1m).

Speaking ahead of the sale, David Bennett, Worldwide Chairman of Sotheby's International Jewellery Division, said, "The Apollo and Artemis Diamonds' will be the stars of our May sale in Geneva – by far the most important pair of earrings ever offered at auction. These exquisite coloured diamonds are enormously rare and each is a wonderful stone in its own right. Together, as a pair of earrings, they are breathtaking. We have named them after Apollo and Artemis, a twin brother and sister of great power and beauty who were among the most widely venerated of the Ancient Greek deities. These are diamonds of great distinction, with extraordinary presence, and we are honoured that Sotheby's has been chosen to bring them to auction in May."

In recent times, the only mine to produce blue diamonds with any regularity is the Cullinan mine in South Africa. When in full production, less than 0.1% of diamonds sourced showed any evidence of blue colour, according to the GIA. An infinitesimally small percentage of those is graded Fancy Vivid Blue.



THE ARTEMIS PINK

The 'Artemis Pink' stands as an exquisite and rare treasure in its own right, displaying an elegant and delicate Fancy Intense Pink hue. Weighing 16 carats, the stone has been carefully cut into a captivating pear shape, matching the Apollo Blue, which perfectly showcases the stone's colour and clarity. The GIA has declared the 'Artemis Pink' to be a 'Type IIa' diamond, describing this category as 'the most chemically pure type' of diamonds, which 'often have exceptional optical transparency'.

The occurrence of pink diamonds remains exceedingly rare: according to the GIA, of all diamonds submitted to their specialists each year, 'no more than 3% are classified as coloured diamonds; less than 5% of those coloured diamonds are predominantly pink'. Thus, a Fancy Intense Pink stone of such rich colour and impressive size can

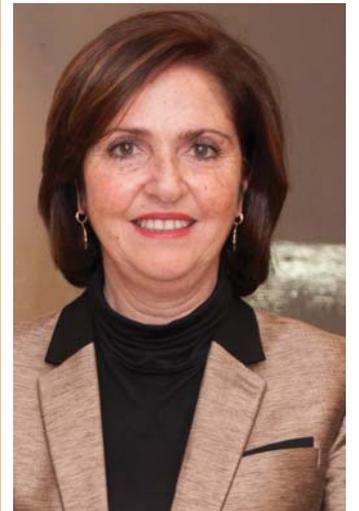
only be described as phenomenally rare.

THE MYTH OF APOLLO AND ARTEMIS

In Greek mythology, Leto (*Latona* in Latin), daughter of the Titans Coeus and Phoebe, had a liaison with Zeus and became pregnant with twins. When Hera, wife of Zeus, discovered this, she forbade Leto from giving birth on *terra firma*, the mainland, any island or any place under the sun. Leto eventually found the barren floating island of Asterios, later named Delos, which was neither mainland nor a real island, and gave birth there, promising the island wealth from the worshippers who would flock to the obscure birthplace of the splendid god who was to come. Leto gave birth to Artemis, the elder twin, without difficulty, but she laboured for nine nights and nine days with Apollo, according to Homer. In Greek and Roman mythology, diamonds were believed to be the tears of the gods.

Artemis, Diana for the Romans, became one of the most venerated of the Ancient Greek deities. She was the goddess of the hunt, wild animals, wilderness, childbirth, virginity and protector of young girls. Also referred to as the goddess of the moon, she was often depicted as a huntress carrying a bow and arrow, and deer and cypress were sacred to her.

Apollo is one of the most important of the Olympian deities in classical Greek and Roman mythology. The ideal of the *kouros*, he has been recognised as the god of music, truth and prophecy, healing, the sun and light, and poetry. In Hellenistic times, as *Apollo Helios*, he became identified among Greeks with Helios, Titan god of the sun, and his sister Artemis similarly equated with Selene, Titan goddess of the moon.



Bernie Mizzi
Head, Board of Trustees
The Storm Petrel Foundation

Places we love we can never leave." Ivan V. Lalic from *Places We Love*

Four years ago, the Trustees of the Storm Petrel Foundation acquired a house in Attard. With the help of a host of gifted professionals and talented craftsmen and women, and with the generosity of the Trustees and donors, we set flight to this ambitious project. The Storm Petrel Foundation invites collectors to display their amazing collections creating sharing and learning spaces for all!

We also look to accepting collections. With legal and financial structures in place, we can ensure that collectors who wish to donate their collections can do so with the peace of mind that the collection will be safe with us and that it will not be disbanded nor sold off.

This has been a labour of love for all of us. Unable to mention the whole team we single out a few people who have earned their mention. Edward Said, architect and lover of old spaces; Pippa Toledo, interior designer, decorator, project leader and

Christian Lacroix designs for the Opéra de Paris

Swarovski recently announced its collaboration with the Opéra de Paris and designer Christian Lacroix to create over 200 dazzling crystal-embellished costumes for the spectacular ballet, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by George Balanchine.

Having first collaborated with Christian Lacroix in 2011 to create costumes for the Opéra de Paris ballet *La Source*, Swarovski has reunited with the designer and the famed French cultural institution to create the sparkling costumes for George Balanchine's reimagining of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Nadja Swarovski, Member of the Swarovski Executive Board, commented: "It is such a pleasure to collaborate for a second time with Christian Lacroix and the Opéra de Paris. Lacroix has an incredible theatrical vision which is brought to life in these beautiful costumes. We are also delighted to partner with the *3e Scène* online platform to help bring the pleasures of dance to an even wider audience."

It took 10,000 hours and a team of 70 people to create Lacroix's 210 dazzling costumes, which shine with nearly 1 million Swarovski stones. An additional 90 hair ornaments, tiaras and crowns were created for the occasion and embellished with crystal fancy stones. All tutus and lace bustiers were hand-embroidered, by the gifted artisans of the Palais Garnier's historic Couture ateliers, and embellished with colourful Swarovski sew-on crystals, beads and pearls, requiring over 400 meters of tulle. The sparkling butterfly wings were adorned with a custom crystal motif applied directly onto delicate



organza.

Christian Lacroix commented: "The costumes, tiaras and crowns, embellished with fancy stones and sprinkled with crystal have been made possible thanks to the traditional yet very creative work of the Opéra de Paris's Ateliers and the support of Swarovski."

Numerous choreographers have been inspired by the dramatic works of Shakespeare for their ballets, including George Balan-

chine, who created his version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the New York City Ballet in 1962. Now, this new production, dazzling with Lacroix's magnificent costumes, enters the repertory of the Opéra de Paris.

Swarovski is also partnering with the Opéra de Paris online platform, *3ème Scène*, which celebrates the worlds of dance and opera by showcasing original content from the industry's leading artists and creatives.



Romaine Petrocchino
Assistant Administrator and
Archivist
The Storm Petrel Foundation

Many people have visited The Storm Petrel Foundation since it was officially inaugurated on 11th March of this year. The general reaction has been 'Wow, this is so much more than we expected!'. This positive reaction, one of awe really, is expressed as soon as they

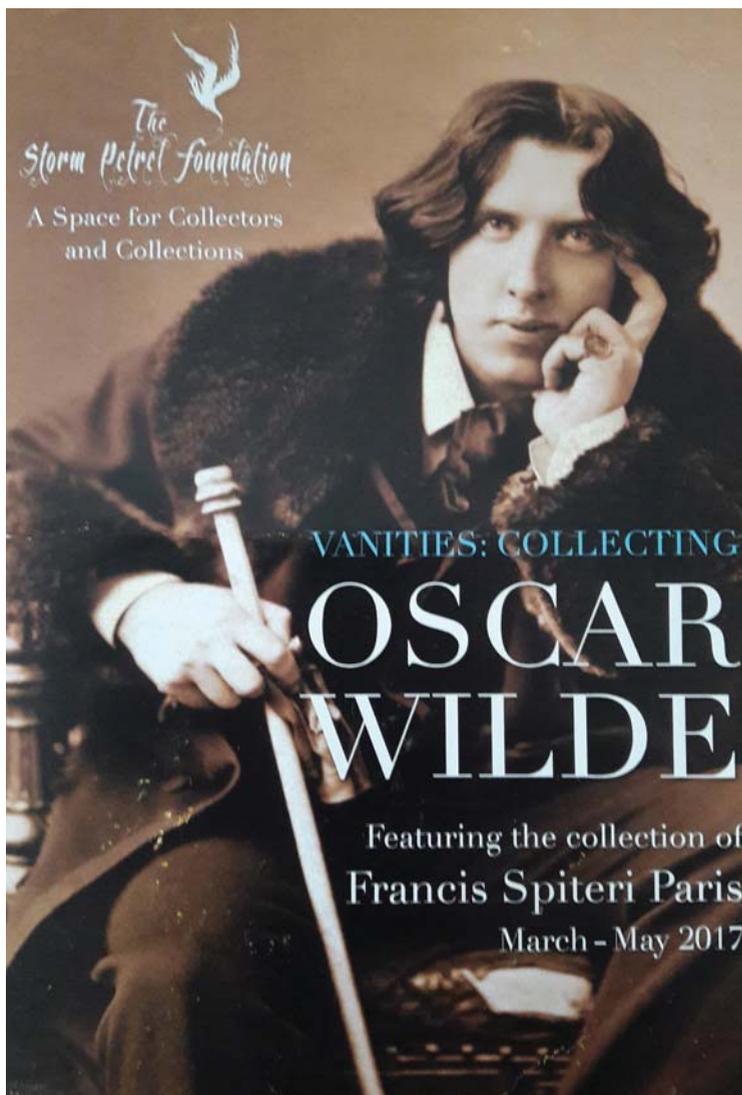
generous dear friend; Francesca Berger decorative artist and designer; Charlotte Vural, landscaper who has given us a magical garden; Alex Borg, resourceful Project Manager; Romaine Petrocochino, mega-dedicated archivist and curator, Sarah Bianchi for procurement and everything else we thought of!

As a nine year old child, I got interested in collections and collectors. My best friend Rita Ganado invited me regularly to her home in Valletta. Her wonderful mother Muriel kept us fed and busy, her father Albert provided the spark. When Albert was absent from the lunch and dinner table he was in his study. When he was absent from the tv session he was in his study. When we waited for him to take us out, he was in his study. But what was there in his study? Collections! This mesmerised 9-year-old was given a tour of the Melitensia, the maps, the stamps, the newspapers, the coins...that's how *this* project began. The aura, the excitement had to be lifted to a different time and place. However, it could only turn into a reality when, my brilliant, good friends Professor Gloria Lauri-Lucente, Professor Saviour Catania, Professor Ivan Callus and Clare Camilleri agreed to join forces to set up a Foundation that hosts Art, Literature and Popular Culture.

Four years of chatter, discussions and hard work landed us here and then Francis Spiteri Paris happened. His Oscar Wilde Collection happened and this exhibition happened.

Since the inauguration, hundreds of visitors have enjoyed the space. We look forward to hosting many more exhibitions that will invite the public to get closer to collectors, collections and to share in the joy that hours of fascination and collecting brings.

enter the premises and catch a glimpse of what lies beyond ... beautiful bespoke shelving, illuminated display cabinets, soft lighting from wall sconces, beautifully painted designs on the high ceilings and original Maltese tiles leading the way to the magical and tranquil garden beyond. A truly enchanting backdrop to the world class exhibition of artefacts and memorabilia depicting Oscar Wilde and the Victorian era, so generously shared by the collector Francis Spiteri Paris. This is the mission of the Foundation coming to fruition - that of providing a unique platform to promote collections that would otherwise remain unseen. Many collections have already been donated to the Foundation, entrusted by individuals who want to ensure that their prized possessions are managed and preserved in a museum environment to the highest archival standards. Future exhibitions and events will feature these resident collections and more.



The fate of a gifted man

An exhibition *Vanities: Collecting Oscar Wilde* featuring the collection of **Francis Spiteri Paris** and organized by **The Storm Petrel Foundation** is running until the end of May.

Marie Benoît asked a handful of personalities who are connected to *The Storm Petrel Foundation* and the exhibition to comment



Vanities: collecting Oscar Wilde will run until the end of May and anyone wishing to view the exhibition may book a visit by contacting the Foundation on 99405027 or info@stormpetrelfoundation.org. Details of events, information and photos are available on the Foundation's Facebook page and also on its website (stormpetrelfoundation.org).



Kathleen Vella
Appointed guide for the exhibition

Oscar Wilde's claim that 'The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about' aptly defines Vanity Fair's founder and editor Thomas Gibson Bowles' intentions for the magazine; a pictorial representation utilising the most innovative technological breakthroughs in printing and lithography of its time, inviting its readers to recognize the vanities of contemporary human existence. Vanity Fair set out to represent the best of the British Empire at its height, set against a background of historical circumstances, indeed a social mirror of Britain of its time.

Francis Spiteri Paris, the owner of the Oscar Wilde collection, could not have presented his sui generis collection in a more poignant setting, than the one presented at the 'Vanities Collecting Oscar Wilde' Collection at 79, Triq San Anton, Attard. Wilde's social persona was itself a caricature. He was a most serious aesthete who allowed himself to be perceived as the witty socialite, the ultimate flaneur of the Victorian Era. He was both a product of and an aesthetic creation for the social milieu of his time. It is within this societal foregrounding that the 'Vanities' collection is physically exhibited. It is with great irony that the chromo-lithographs of the social protagonists of the British legal system in Wilde's time, the barristers, lawyers and judges who



To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all

Oscar Wilde



were involved in the legal plot to incriminate Wilde, serve to emphasise and to confirm that Wilde's crime was indeed a social one related to his genre of vanity, a vanity which did not, alas, conform to theirs. Wilde related vanity to consciousness, to the awareness of one's own identity, and here indeed is the story of a man convicted of and for his social brazenness; his only crime was perhaps his honesty about his inclinations and about the way he wanted to live his life. Viewing the first editions of 'De Profundis' and 'The Green Carnation' in a glass case which hosts the reflections of lithographs on the bordering walls, of the social protagonists who defined the age and the rules for the age is indeed a harrowing experience. In the final room of the exhibition, the key to C.3.3. and 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' are now themselves confined under the scrutinous gaze of 'the best of the British Empire at its height', the army of 'legal men' responsible for the fabrication of the most notorious legal case of its time; an embarrassment in ethical legal terms. The key is now locked and well-guarded, alas their reputation is not, but the voice of Wilde reverberates around the space which re-tells his story and re-writes history through these lovingly tended articles from the past. This is much more than an exposition of precious memorabilia; it is indeed a work of art in itself, befitting of the aesthete it represents.



Prof. Gloria Lauri Lucente
Trustee

What gives the Storm Petrel Foundation its distinctive cast is its unique combination of the old and the new, the past and the present, the conventional and the unconventional. A wonder-

ful case in point in which the canonical and the popular blend seamlessly together is the collection of literary works, lithographs and memorabilia dedicated to Oscar Wilde which Francis Spiteri Paris has so generously shared with the Foundation for its inaugural exhibition. With a view to organizing other exhibitions in the future which will host texts ranging from literary works to comics, from films to graphic novels, from posters to all sorts of memorabilia, we strongly encourage anyone who would like to share his or her collection to contact the Foundation on info@stormpetrelfoundation.org. This will give visitors to the Foundation the opportunity to admire from multiple prisms and perspectives popular culture and its intriguing engagement with more traditional works of art.