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# Koopman Rare Art

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## **Rings at Koopman**

**By Kimberley Smith**

As a huge fan of rings myself (I wear them on almost every finger!), I thought I would write about some of my favourites we currently have in stock.

A ring symbolises many powerful and enduring concepts, including love and commitment, status and also personal style; from a diamond engagement ring to a chunky cocktail ring to several rings worn stacked together, each give a hint into the personal story of the person wearing them.

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## **Engagement Rings**

Engagement rings have a lot of history dating back thousands of years. As far back as Ancient Egypt where Egyptians were believed to have used rings- likely made of leather- as symbols of eternity, and Ancient Rome where brides were given rings made of iron or gold to signify ownership and the contract of marriage, their use signified even then a formal token of betrothal. Then many years later in 1477, the first documented use of a diamond engagement ring occurred when the Archduke Maximilian of Austria gave Mary of Burgundy a diamond ring to formalise their engagement, setting a precedent among European nobility and aristocracy. The Victorian era saw engagement rings become more ornate and decorative, often featuring coloured stones and elaborate designs. But it was an extremely affective marketing campaign by De Beers in 1947 stating that “A diamond is forever” which most strongly influenced western consumer habits and cemented diamonds as the “standard” for engagement rings in our modern day.

And speaking of diamond engagement rings, here are a few of my favourites:

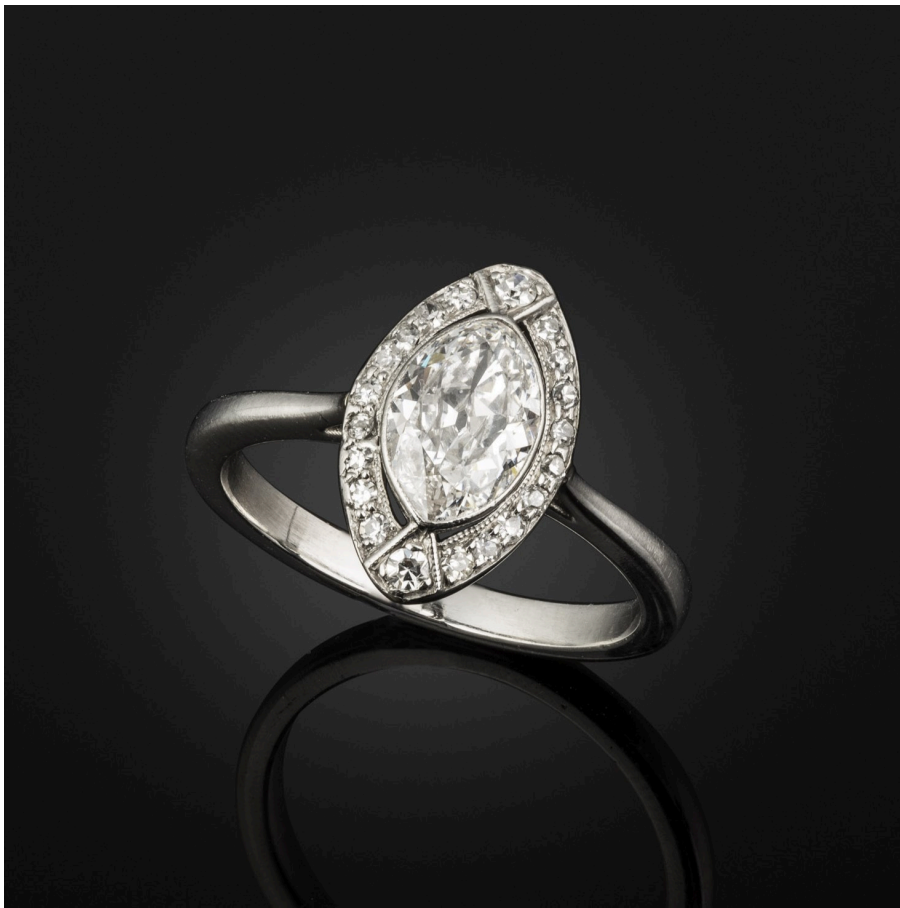
### **A square emerald cut diamond ring**



*set with a 2.42 carat F colour VS 2 clarity emerald cut diamond, with tapered baguette shoulders mounted in platinum.*

This is an absolutely timeless and classic design; the central stone set with baguettes, in my opinion, will never going out of style. When you think of the modern day classic engagement ring, this is an extremely popular style and this one in particular has a beautifully white and clean step cut diamond as the focus. No one would say no to this!

#### **An antique marquise cut diamond ring**



*set with an approx 1.00 carat old marquise cut diamond surrounded by circular cut diamonds. Mounted in platinum.*

Of course our focus is mostly on antique jewellery, so naturally when buying diamond rings I tend to veer towards these. This ring has a beautiful antique marquise cut in the centre and looks very delicate on the hand, without being too small. It is a perfect ring to wear every day and although marquise cut diamonds are rising in popularity, this one is unique in its style.

**An antique 3 stone old cut diamond ring**



*Set with a central 2.02 carat old mine cut diamond G colour SI1 clarity, with two old mine cut side stones; 1.09ct F colour SI1 clarity and 1.02ct G colour VS2 clarity respectively. Mounted in platinum.*

I have always loved three stone diamond rings; triple the sparkle! They have never gone out of style and are known to represent the past, present and future thus really symbolising true commitment. Although there are modern versions made today, if you can find an antique example set with old cut stones you are in for a treat as the chunkier cut of the diamonds creates more light bouncing off each stone. This style of ring is just as popular today as it was in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (this example is circa 1910), encouraged by De Beers campaign of “When one diamond is not enough”.

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### **Yellow Diamond Rings**

Natural yellow diamonds were discovered in large quantities in the 1800s following the discovery of the Kimberley Mine, gaining a lot of attention for their rarity and vibrant colour, especially among aristocrats and collectors.

The most notable example was the Tiffany Yellow diamond which was discovered in 1877 and really brought yellow diamonds to the public eye. The 128.54 carat fancy yellow cushion cut diamond was acquired by Tiffany for \$18,000 in 1878 and has been held in their collection ever since, only worn four times in history by Mrs Sheldon Whitehouse, Audrey Hepburn, Lady Gaga and Beyonce.



Since then, yellow diamonds have remained extremely popular, given their relative rarity compared to white diamonds and variations in colour and warmth.

**Fancy Yellow Diamond and Diamond Ring, Raymond Yard**



*Centring an emerald-cut Fancy Yellow VVS2 clarity diamond weighing 4.44 carats, accented by single, trapeze and bullet-cut diamonds weighing approximately 0.80 carat, signed Yard.*

I absolutely love this ring, with its clear deco geometric design and soft yellow colour, it really is a beauty that has transcended the past 100 years and looks as modern today as it would have in the 1920s. Like most deco jewels, this ring is set in platinum and features step cut diamonds, a popular cut of the period. The ring was made by Raymond Yard, an influential American jeweller renowned for his art deco designs, exceptional craftsmanship and use of the highest quality gemstones.

#### **An Antique Yellow Diamond Cluster Ring**



*Set with a 2.98ct fancy light yellow, SI1 clarity old mine cut diamond surrounded by scalloped bezel set round brilliant cut diamonds. Set in white and yellow gold.*

A slightly older version, this ring is circa 1900 and would have been a very early example of a yellow diamond being used in the engagement ring style. Cluster rings were seen as early as the 1700s, often using rose cut diamonds set in floral shaped clusters, but during the late Victorian/ Edwardian era they often featured slightly larger diamonds surrounded by old circular cut smaller diamonds. It is very rare to find one with an old mine cut yellow diamond centre (especially once which hasn't been recut), so this really is a special and rare ring.

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### **Cocktail rings**

Large, eye-catching cocktail rings have been popular since the 1920s, worn as a signal of confidence, independence and wealth, often on a woman's right hand to separate it from a wedding or engagement ring. They are often big and bold, featuring a large central stone (often a coloured gemstone) surrounded by smaller accent stones in a decorative setting.

In the mid-20th century, they become associated with status and self-expression and remain a staple of statement jewellery in the modern day.

### **Mid-20th century aquamarine and sapphire ring, Cartier**





*The principal rectangular step cut aquamarine claw set with calibré cut sapphires to the shoulders, signed 'Cartier' and stamped to interior of shank*

Starting strong with the perfect example; set with a large, bright, evenly saturated aquamarine beautifully complimented by sapphire shoulders. This embodies all the typical elements of the cocktail ring; it's oversized, it's bright and bold, Its mid 20th century and best of all, it's by Cartier. Aquamarine was, and still is, an extremely popular choice for these rings due to its colour, clarity and affordability.

**Rose gold, diamond and pink sapphire "Nouvelle Vague" ring**





*the articulated beaded gold fringe falling in a cascading circular form, the beads graduating larger to the ends, numerous terminal beads collet set with either a circular cut diamond or pink sapphire, upon a bold gold tapering bombé mount.*

A more modern and extremely fun option. The Cartier Nouvelle Vague ring was first introduced in the 1990s in Paris, and aimed to capture the dynamic and diverse spirit of the city. It is characterised by its fluid yet sculptural form and is contemporary yet timeless and fun, making it a wonderful statement cocktail ring. Although these rings are still made today (with an extremely long waiting list) the pink sapphire variations are hard to find, so get your hands on this while you can.

**An emerald and diamond ring, circa 1930**



*of art deco design set with a triangular cut emerald, Colombian origin, insignificant treatment Surrounded by. Approx 1.50cts of circular and baguette cut diamonds and 1.00ct remaining emeralds.*

I love this example; it is still bright and bold yet wonderfully unique. It features an unusually cut triangular shaped emerald of Colombian origin, giving it that bright green hue. Although emeralds are a precious stone, they were widely used in cocktail rings particularly during the height of their popularity in the 1920s-1950s. This was due to several factors. Firstly, emeralds are a soft stone and easily scratched so would rarely be worn as an engagement ring. This made them more appealing in the use of cocktail rings which would mostly be worn on special occasions. Their deep, vibrant colour also made them a popular choice, particularly how they contrast with diamonds and white metals like platinum.

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### **Toi et Moi rings**

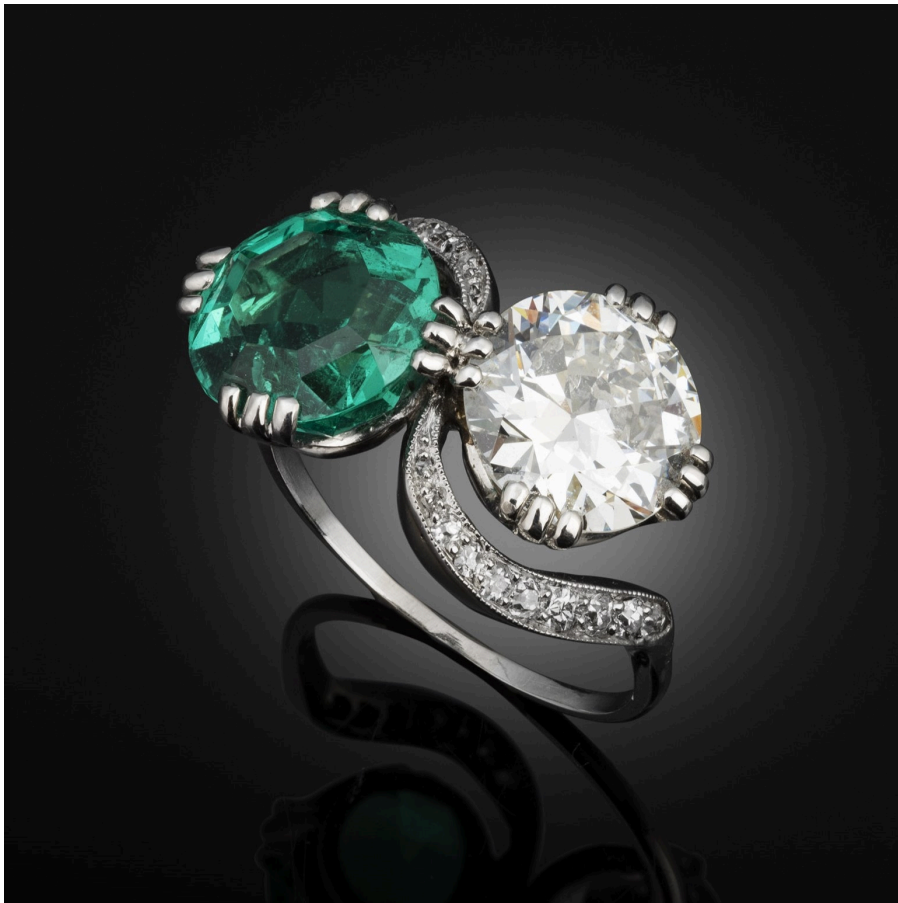
Translating in French to “you and me”, these rings are a romantic and symbolic design that feature two stones set side by side, essentially representing two people coming together. This timeless style has been popular since the 18th century, when Napoleon Bonaparte gave one to Josephine de Beauharnais in 1776 featuring a diamond and a sapphire.



Unfortunately we don't have this one in stock as it sold for nearly \$1m in 2013, highlighting its historical significance and enduring value.

As an alternative though, we do have this one...

#### **Edwardian emerald and diamond 'toi-et-moi' ring, c1900**



*set with a cushion shaped emerald weighing 3.05cts and an old European-cut diamond weighing 2.39cts, within a millegre-set old mine-cut diamond crossover platinum mount*

This is a wonderful Edwardian example of a "toi et moi" ring, with the significantly sized emerald and diamond perfectly complimenting each other, set within a delicate diamond set mount allowing the focus to be on the two gems. Edwardian rings, and jewellery in general, made during this period were known for their elegance, lightness and intricate craftsmanship, and this ring truly highlights that.

### **Gypsy rings**

One of my favourite styles, gypsy rings first gained popularity in the late 19th century, particularly during the Victorian era. They are known for their robust design and secure gemstone setting sitting flush within the mount. Gypsy rings were, and still are, popular amongst both men and women and are often set with diamonds, sapphires or rubies.

#### **A pink sapphire and diamond gypsy ring, c1900**



*Mounted in white gold, with a central pink sapphire weighing 1.70 carats, the side diamonds approx.0.20 carats each.*

#### **A three-stone gypsy ring c1910**



*mounted in platinum, set with a total carat weight of approx 2.45 carats*

These two rings are very typical examples of the style, each set with three stones which was most common, sitting flush with in the mount and creating a chunky, yet sleek look on the hand. They are often worn as pinky rings (also as signet rings) or nowadays even as engagement rings. Personally I find gypsy rings to be the most perfect every day ring as the smooth chunky band makes them comfortable to wear and the setting makes them extremely durable.

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