

PAN

AMSTERDAM

EPOQUE FINE JEWELS



A graceful, strolling panther brooch by Cartier

A graceful, strolling panther brooch by Cartier set throughout with brilliant cut diamonds, highlighted with buff-top onyx dots and pear-shaped emerald eyes, mounted in platinum and 18 karat gold.

Signed Cartier and numbered. Early 21st century.

This Cartier onyx and diamond panther brooch is an iconic piece of jewelry, symbolizing both elegance and boldness. This brooch features a meticulously crafted panther, its sleek body encrusted with sparkling diamonds, and its spots highlighted by black onyx. Emeralds accentuate the eyes, giving the panther a piercing gaze. The craftsmanship involved in such a piece demonstrates Cartier's attention to detail and mastery of combining precious stones to create lifelike, almost sculptural representations of animals.

The panther motif has become synonymous with Cartier, and much of this can be attributed to Jeanne Toussaint, who played a transformative role in the jewelry house's design evolution. Jeanne Toussaint was born in Charleroi in 1887 and raised in a family of lacemakers who made her aware of fashion and style from a young age. She moved to Paris where she was introduced to the French society. She soon became acquainted with Coco Chanel, the illustrator George Barbier and, most importantly, Louis Cartier who was enthralled with Toussaint's taste for fashion. In 1913, he hired her to coordinate his company's accessories, handbags and objects. After first being promoted to head Cartier's silver department in 1918, in 1933 Louis Cartier conferred on her full responsibility for artistic design, an area which until then he had directed himself. Jeanne Toussaint, also called 'La Panthere', was a visionary designer whose style pushed boundaries. Known for her boldness, independence, and exceptional taste, she introduced themes of nature and exoticism into Cartier's collections, with the panther becoming her most famous symbol.

In a historical context, Jeanne Toussaint's influence extended beyond mere aesthetics; she redefined femininity in jewelry. At a time when women's roles in high society were changing, Toussaint's designs, like the Panther brooch, mirrored a new sense of power, freedom, and sophistication for women. The first panther motifs appeared on a wristwatch in 1914. The most famous panther was a brooch commissioned by Wallis Simpson, the Duchess of Windsor in 1948, a woman known for her daring fashion choices. This association cemented the panther's status as a symbol of fierce femininity and strength.

Toussaint's contribution to Cartier and the world of luxury jewelry endures, with the panther motif becoming one of the most enduring and recognizable emblems in Cartier's history. Through pieces like this onyx and diamond panther brooch, she left an indelible mark on 20th-century design, blending the opulence of diamonds with the mystery and power of the panther, embodying both grace and danger.

Jeanne Toussaint retired from Cartier in 1970 and died in Paris on 7 May 1976.