MUSEO DEL GIOIELLO VICENZA

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Press Release (English Translation)

VICENZA'S "MUSEO DEL GIOIELLO" UNVEILS NEW TEMPORARY EXHIBITION ON OPERA COSTUME JEWELLERY DESIGNED BY CORBELLA

- **From June 9th to September 30th, 2026 a tribute to costume jewellery on display in the exhibition curated by professor Paola Venturelli**
- **A small treasure trove of memorabilia: from the creations worn by opera singers Callas, Tebaldi and Pampanini, to the Rubelli fabrics that adorned the interiors of La Scala and La Fenice theaters, up to an autographed letter from the "Divina" Callas.**
- **Marking the centenary of the premiere of *Turandot*, the exhibition features the score of the La Scala recording with Maria Callas, bearing the annotations of Maestro Tullio Serafin**

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Vicenza (Italy), June 9th 2026 – Jewels worn by opera divas, tiaras, crowns, and stage costume ornaments, precious fabrics and original documents from the last century are the highlights of a new temporary exhibition at the **Jewellery Museum in Vicenza**, on view **from June 9th to September 30th, 2026.**
Entitled **"Divas and Jewels on Stage. Corbella for Renata Tebaldi, Maria Callas, and the Opera Singers"** and curated by professor Paola Venturelli, the exhibition presents a significant selection of jewellery associated with some of the most celebrated opera singers of the twentieth century.
The pieces come from the extensive and diverse production of Corbella, the Milan-based company known as the *First Italian Factory of Jewellery and Weapons for the Theater*. Founded in 1865, Corbella served for more than a century as the leading and most authoritative international in theatrical jewellery and accessories, supplying many of the world's most prestigious opera houses and theatres.
The exhibition pays tribute to legendary performers including Rosetta Pampanini, Margherita Carosio, Margherita Cipolato Nicolai, Maria Caniglia, Giulietta Simionato, the "voice of an angel" Renata Tebaldi, and Maria Callas, the celebrated "Divina."

Crafted from gilded metal, filigree, glass paste, rhinestones, and a variety of ingeniously worked materials, the jewels on display reveal designs inspired both by contemporary high jewellery and by historical models that were carefully studied and reinterpreted. Among the most fascinating pieces are creations associated to performances that have left an indelible mark on the history of opera: a polychrome Egyptian-style necklace once worn by Maria Callas, an exquisite tiara created for Umberto Giordano's opera Fedora, the remarkable headdress designed for Leila in The Pearl Fishers, a jeweled bra perhaps inspired by the exotic allure of Mata Hari, and decorated hairpins created for Giacomo Puccini's Madama Butterfly. Together, these objects transport visitors into the enchanting world of theatre and opera.
Particularly striking is the crown associated with **Turandot, first performed at Teatro alla Scala on 25 April 1926, whose centenary is celebrated this year**. Featuring elegant *en tremblant* elements, the crown was worn at the premiere by soprano Rosa Raisa and has since become one of the most iconic visual symbols associated with Puccini's masterpiece.

"Stage jewellery is not a simple ornament; it is a narrative element that accompanies the performer, enhances their stage presence and plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of the character - explains curator **Paola Venturelli**. The exhibition is conceived as a concise yet compelling compendium of exceptional creations which, although not made from precious materials, possess extraordinary expressive and scenographic value.

These jewels interact with light, movement, and costume design, guiding visitors into the visionary world of melodrama and opera, conveying all their aesthetic and symbolic power."

From its foundation in 1865 until its closure in 2013, Corbella established itself as the official supplier of weapons, jewellery, and stage accessories to the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. The exceptional quality of its craftmanship soon earned the company commissions from the world's most prestigious theaters, including La Fenice in Venice, the Teatro Costanzi in Rome and the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. The jewellery was often purchased by singers themselves who carried them from stage to stage. For five generations, the workshop embellished performances at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, the Teatro Regio in Turin, the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, the Barcelona Opera, and the London Opera, giving rise to partnerships including the celebrated costume designer Caramba, who became Artistic Director of Teatro alla Scala in 1921 during the tenure of Arturo Toscanini.
This fascinating story of costume design, theatrical history, and goldsmithing artistry is brought to life in the ground-floor exhibition space of the Jewellery Museum in Vicenza. The exhibition can be visited with a single ticket that also grants access to the museum's permanent collection (opening hours - with single ticket including the permanent exhibition: Tuesday to Friday, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm, Saturday and Sunday, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm).

"Exhibiting Corbella stage jewellery at the Jewellery Museum in Vicenza is a source of pride for us. Since 1865, and particularly during the time of my great-great-grandfather Achille, the Corbella Company, the *First Italian Factory of Jewellery and Weapons for the Theater*, designed and produced theatrical jewellery that reached its peak during the golden age of the 1920s and 1940s, when its harmony with Caramba's costumes became unparalleled. The pieces on display in this temporary exhibition will convey to the public all the charm that made great opera singers such as Pampanini, Tebaldi, and Callas eager to wear them," says **Angelica Corbella**, descendant of the historic jewellery dynasty.

Among the treasures enriching the exhibition hall are two important documents on loan from the **"Tullio Serafin" Historical Archive: an original score of *Turandot* and an autographed letter from 1967 by "La Divina," addressed to Maestro Serafin**, in which she expressed her hope of seeing him again in Rome. **Andrea Castello**, President of the "Tullio Serafin" Historical Archive and Artistic Director of the Vicenza in Lirica Festival, emphasizes: "The Maestro was a true talent scout. Born in Rottanova di Cavarzere, near Venice, he became one of the greatest conductors in Italy and the world. He discovered and conducted Maria Callas in 1947, but before that he had also worked with Maria Caniglia, Rosa Ponselle, and many other artists who went on to become major names in opera worldwide. Therefore, we always welcome high-quality opportunities such as this initiative by the Museo del Gioiello to commemorate Serafin and his love of opera. The score of Turandot on display at the Museum is the one used by the Maestro for Maria Callas's performance during the recording at Teatro alla Scala in 1957."

And that's not all. The stage jewels interact with two prestigious fabrics from the historic Venetian company Rubelli, founded in 1858. "Two theatres told through two fabrics. Ivory and gold for the lampas that Rubelli created for the Sale Apollinee of Teatro La Fenice and named, for the occasion, 'Traviata' in homage to the opera performed at its reopening in 2003. Then there is the red damask created for the boxes of Teatro alla Scala. We hope visitors can immerse themselves in the atmosphere that singers such as Callas and Tebaldi experienced in these places, which are so important to opera and whose unique character is also created by their furnishings," comments **Irene Favaretto**, former Professor of the History of Archaeology at the University of Padua and now Director of the Rubelli Foundation in Venice.

The exhibition catalogue is enriched by historical images of the pieces on display, worn by some of the most beloved voices in opera (Silvana Editoriale).

At the same time, the exhibition "Gioiello–Italia. Materia Tecnica Arte. Tra Antico e Moderno" (Jewellery–Italy. Technical Matter, Art. Between Ancient and Modern), curated by Paola Venturelli, will remain open until 2027 in the six rooms on the upper floor of the Jewellery Museum. It features a curated selection of emblematic pieces, artifacts, and works of art from 13 museums and foundations, created and transformed in Italy from the 5th century BC to the 21st century. The permanent exhibition highlights key moments and specificities of a rich and complex, centuries-old goldsmithing tradition, revealing the identity of Italian jewellery as a mosaic created by the work of workshops, masters, and regions, but also by exchanges, experimentation, and ongoing dialogues with the past and with innovation.

The exhibit "Gioiello–Italia. Gioiello–Italia. Material Technique Art. Between Ancient and Modern."
Opened in November 2025 and running until 2027, the Jewellery Museum's new exhibition, curated by Paola Venturelli, tells the story of jewelry created and transformed over time in Italy. The exhibition unfolds across six rooms and eleven thematic sections, following a chronological itinerary from the 5th century B.C. to the 21st century. A carefully selected collection of emblematic pieces, artifacts, and artworks from 13 museums and foundations highlights key moments and the specificities of a rich, complex, and centuries-old goldsmithing tradition. The exhibition reveals the identity of Italian jewellery as a vast mosaic: made up of workshops, masters, and regions, but also of exchanges, experimentation, and ongoing dialogues with the past and with innovation.

The "Museo del Gioiello" of Vicenza
The first museum in Italy and one of the few in the world dedicated exclusively to the art of jewellery, the Vicenza Jewellery Museum is a permanent exhibition space located inside the Basilica Palladiana, a UNESCO World Heritage site, in the heart of the city's historic center. Inaugurated in 2014, it is a project initiated by Italian Exhibition Group S.p.A. and, since 2025, has been managed by Vicenza Holding S.p.A., the company representing the Municipality of Vicenza, the Province of Vicenza, and the Vicenza Chamber of Commerce in the trade fair company organizing the international jewellery show Vicenzaoro. www.museodelgioiello.it.

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